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SHORT STORIES
A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 620. FOR WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 17TH, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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LIST OF PRIZES:

1	Cash Prize £50	£50 0
1	Cash Prize, £40	40 0
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1000	Cash Prizes, 10s. each ...	500 0
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1000	Ladies' Umbrellas, 7/6 each	375 0
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25,602		**£10,000 0**

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SHORT STORIES

No. 620.] For the Week Ending November 17th, 1900. [One Penny.

OLD - WHITE - FROCK.

Elliot Standring was always regarded as a well-groomed man, but he never took such trouble over his toilet as on that autumn evening when he was to try his luck with Helen Purdon. He had been invited by her uncle to dine with that gentleman and the object of his affection; he had arranged it with Mr. Carter, who was favourable to his suit and upon whom he had ventured to rely for assistance.

Standring was not over sanguine, concerning the result of his attempt. He knew that others had tried and failed; it was supposed that their failure was due to want of affection for them on the part of Miss Purdon, although there was an idea abroad that there might be some other reason, but nothing definite was known.

Standring was bound to admit that Miss Purdon had not given him much encouragement—perhaps no encouragement at all, for he might have been mistaken in his conclusions; but he was head over ears in love with her, and was determined to make an attempt to win her.

He summed up his qualifications as he surveyed himself in the mirror. Tolerably good looking, young and healthy, a fair income derived from investments made by his deceased father and left entirely to him when his father died just twelve months ago. That was all; not very much, but enough to satisfy a reasonable woman, as Helen Purdon was, who herself had ample means. Good character? There was no dispute on that point.

The others had had better chances than he, to judge by appearances, but that fact did not deter him, and moreover it is not safe to judge by appearances. So he ought to be hopeful; but he was not.

It was quite a cosy little dinner party, with Standring as the only guest. There was nothing extraordinary about this, as Mr. Carter occasionally invited a gentleman friend, and Miss Purdon at times invited a lady friend, and those times were not always the same, so that the dinner party might consist of two gentlemen and one lady, or, two ladies and one gentleman.

Miss Purdon and her uncle resided together; it would be more correct to say that Mr. Carter resided with his niece, as the house belonged to her. When she had been left alone in the world, her father's money had come to her, and her mother's brother had come to reside with her at her request. He had tried to induce her to have a companion also, but Miss Purdon declined, saying that she could manage the household herself. So Mr. Carter, who was not endowed with a large amount of wealth, gladly accepted the arrangement, which had now lasted for more than three years.

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Standring, in spite of the fact that he was a society man, was a prey to nervous agitation during dinner; he was becoming still less hopeful of the result of the interview which, by the aid of Mr. Carter he was to obtain with Miss Purdon after dessert. During the dessert, he recovered his spirits to some extent and the conversation became general.

Standring thought he would endeavour to sound the depths before he had the interview; he had just a slight misgiving that Captain Germaine, although reported to have failed in storming the citadel of Helen's heart, had come nearer to success than was supposed, and he was resolved to fathom this little mystery if possible, so that he might know what to expect in the way of odds when he made his own attack.

"I hear that Captain Germaine has volunteered for service in the Soudan," he remarked in a casual tone, taking observation of Helen from the corner of his eye.

There was a dry cough from Mr. Carter, who appeared to be gazing very intently at something on his serviette.

Standring felt a little chill go through him, for he perceived that he had made a false step, and before Helen had time to speak, he had skilfully turned the conversation by asking Mr. Carter if he had heard anything lately of young Jones, who created such a sensation by his violin playing at the Freemantles' reception.

Dessert over, Mr. Carter made an excuse for retiring, thus giving Standring his chance of a few minutes alone with Helen. The young fellow seized the opportunity without delay, and almost before the girl knew what was happening she was listening to an impassioned declaration of love.

"Mr. Standring," she said quietly, yet unable to suppress a trace of agitation which had begun to show itself in her face, "you have taken me somewhat by surprise. I think it is due to you—it is certainly due to myself—that I should speak frankly, even at the risk of being thought unwomanly."

Standring brought his eloquent appeal to an abrupt termination and allowed her to speak. Had he failed? He awaited her next words with feverish anxiety,

"Sit down, and listen to what I have to say," continued Helen, her voice having a firm ring in it this time. "I have one aim in life, to the attainment of which everything else must be subservient. I will tell you briefly and plainly what that aim is.

"About four years ago, my father, who had an extensive knowledge of Egypt and the Soudan, the customs and

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dialects of its inhabitants, left England on his own responsibility in a patriotic endeavour to glean information for the British Government that might be useful in connection with the saving of the Khartoum Garrison, and in the preservation of the Soudan generally from the clutches of the Mahdi. He has never been heard of since he left Egypt proper for the interior. I fancy that you do not know this."

"I have heard that Professor Purdon was killed by Arabs," murmured Standring sympathetically.

"That is the current belief," she went on steadily, "but there is nothing to confirm it beyond the continued silence of my father. But he may be alive and a prisoner. He may be anywhere in the interior of Africa with Gordon, whom many people believe to be still in the land of the living. My aim is to obtain confirmation of his death, or to find him if he still lives! It will be a great undertaking, but I will devote my life to it if necessary. I am studying the dialects and customs, and I am awaiting the course of events and watching for the opportunity to go out there with an expedition, or otherwise, to find him or his body. It is impossible for me, a woman, to go now, in the unsettled state of the country. You have spoken to me of love; I will not marry until my object is secured, and I will marry the man who either finds my father or helps me most to do so!"

It was quite a cosy little dinner party, with Standring as the only guest.

"But the man who was lucky enough to render you this service, might not be the man you love," objected Standring abashed.

"If a man does so much for me, I shall love him with all my heart!"

Standring advanced no further plea, he could see that it would be useless. If he wished to win Helen Purdon, the way to do so was through the Soudan.

"Make no rash promises, Mr. Standring," interposed Helen, as he was about to speak. "Let us dismiss this subject and talk of other things. Take time for reflection and ask yourself whether I am worth the task involved."

* * * * *

What a number of changes are sometimes crowded into the short space of twelve months! This was the thought that occurred to the mind of Elliot Standring while on out-post duty in the Soudan, as nearly as possible one year after the eventful evening of the dinner with Miss Purdon and her uncle.

He had meditated carefully on the task which Helen had set for the man who loved her, and soon afterwards he had gone to work deliberately to perform that task. He had set out for Egypt and had begun his search for men to help him and to study the best course of procedure.

It had taken a long time, longer than he had imagined, to complete the initial steps; and then, when he felt he was really making progress, his plans were upset.

He had sold out of the best concerns in which his money was invested, in order to obtain fresh funds for carrying out his undertaking; leaving the rest until the last moment, as prices were not good.

Having spent his ready money, he had written home to his stockbroker to sell out the rest at the best prices that could be obtained. But before his letter had reached home he received one telling him that the remaining investments were practically worthless; the companies, mostly mining companies, had failed or were in such a condition that they intended to go into voluntary liquidation, cut down capital and call upon the shareholders to pay twenty or twenty-five per cent. more on their shares in order to "put the concern on its legs again."

Standring found that when he had met his liabilities, there would be no further money to go on with, and, in addition, his income was gone.

After that he had an attack of fever, and when he had recovered, he gave up the hope of ever winning Helen Purdon. A month later he was wearing the uniform of a private in an infantry regiment and was on his way to face the Dervishes. He might have suggested to Helen that she should furnish the money to go on, but his expedition had melted away during his illness, and it did not seem fair to ask her to intrust him with the necessary money. It was possible that she had less confidence in his ability than he had.

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He had joined under the name of Elliot, and Private Elliot quickly won the good-will of his comrades and the notice of his officers, and seemed to have good prospects of promotion. But this did not appear to have any cheering effect on Elliot; his demeanour was that of a happy-go-lucky, devil-may-care soldier, ready to volunteer for the most dangerous work. The fact was that Elliot would gladly have welcomed the bullet which would put an end to an existence, the future of which contained nothing hopeful.

"Well, seen him?"

This was the question addressed to Elliot by a comrade when he came off duty.

"No! You fellows have been frightened by a shadow!"

There was an indignant outcry from several of the men who had heard this reply. Shadow, indeed! Why he had been seen by scores of men! That tall, thin figure of a Dervish, in the long white robe, with eyes shining with the light of religious fanaticism—a shadow! The men's lips curled in contempt.

"There ain't no doubt about it, Mr. Tommy Elliot," said a man lying close to where Standring was standing, "it's a real man and no mistake. He comes upon you suddenly, with no weapons in his hands, and warns you to get out of the country and tell all the British to do the same. I dunno whether it's genuine or a fake; two or three times, when our fellows have been a bit scared, the enemy have swooped down upon us, which shows that they were close behind him, but as a rule he just warns you and off he goes."

"How do you know he warns you?" asked Elliot. "He doesn't speak English, I suppose?"

"You needn't talk in that sneering way," retorted another Tommy rather angrily. "It ain't often he says anything you can hear properly; it's usually a mumble, but you can tell by his actions what he means, and poor Jimmy Gates, who was cut down in the last scrimmage and knew some of the lingo, said that was what Old White-Frock meant."

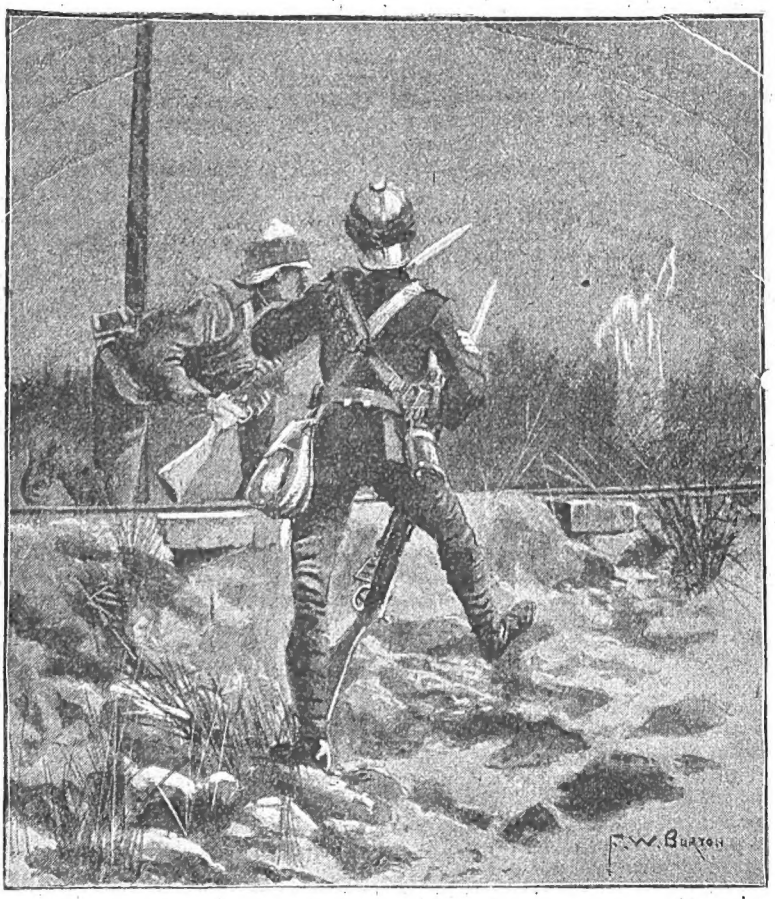
"I say, boys, Germaine is missing!" cried a corporal who had just arrived on the scene.

"Looks as if the blacks had got him. He must have strayed beyond the lines."

"P'raps Old White-Frock has run off with him!" interjected another soldier.

"I'm sorry for him if they have got him, although I don't pretend to love him, and if he had gone home invalided I should have said 'good riddance!'"

There was a chorus of approval, which confirmed the reports that Elliot had heard of the man whom he regarded somewhat in the light of a rival. He had overheard odd words from officers while acting as orderly, from which it appeared that Germaine scarcely merited the dignity of being called an officer and a gentleman; the captain was an impecunious man, who was not too particular on various points where money was concerned, while his disposition was not such as to win him the affection either of officers or men. Nevertheless, Elliot himself was too much of a gentleman to rejoice at the downfall of another; on the contrary, he was horrified at the thought that Captain Germaine might be tortured to death, and he longed for the chance to help him.



"There he is!" interrupted Elliot.

But there was little hope that he, a private, would have any opportunity of rendering assistance. He pictured to himself the possible grief of Helen Purdon when she heard of Germaine's fate, and his frame of mind for the rest of that day did not tend to make him a greater favourite with his comrades.

On the following day he was one of a score of men selected for special duty. The visits of Old White-Frock were becoming unpleasant, and it was resolved to capture the old man if possible. The easiest way to have got rid of him would have been to shoot him, but it was not in accordance with British chivalry to shoot down an unarmed man. So these men were detained for duty at adjacent points along a tract of country where the old man might be expected.

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Elliot and Harry Baker were nearest to the railway line which was being gradually carried along the country in the execution of the steadfast object of reconquering the district right away to Khartoum.

It was near night-fall when they met at the railway track at the end of their sentry-go and exchanged a word before wheeling round to pace back to the other extremity.

"He hasn't turned up yet," remarked Elliot with a smile.

"You'll see him one of these——"

"There he is!" interrupted Elliot, and Baker, facing about, saw Old White-Frock in the accustomed attitude.

How he had contrived to get so near to them without being seen was a fact which they could not understand, and did not waste any time in trying to explain to their own satisfaction. Baker went down on one knee and was levelling his rifle, when Elliot stopped him with a gesture and the exclamation "don't!"

Reminded of orders by the word and action, Baker dashed to his feet again and both soldiers made a dash for the old man. He glared at them for an instant, then turned and fled.

The two men pursued him, but Old White-Frock was surprisingly fleet of foot for one of his years and kept the lead; half-a-dozen of the other special duty men, who saw the chase, joined in it, but they were unable to come up with Elliot and Baker, having a cross stretch to traverse. They kept up the pursuit until they reached the boundary laid down in their orders, and then they stopped; but Elliot and Baker, now wild with excitement, forgot everything in the way of orders and went on.

The old man, lightly clad, gained ground and increased the distance between his pursuers and himself. He reached one of those configurations of the ground which afforded shelter to the Dervishes for ambuscades, and disappeared. As they neared this mound, the two men were brought to a standstill by the sound of revolver and rifle shots, and cries of rage and pain. A minute later they saw a British uniform come from behind the mound, stagger a few yards and then fall.

"I believe it's Germaine!" gasped Baker.

"We must help him—he is wounded and we can't let an officer be killed without making a fight to save him!" cried Elliot.

The two soldiers ran forward and reached the captain's side. Baker took the revolver and then the two men hurriedly dragged the half-conscious officer, whom they now recognised, to the mound so that the Dervishes could not pick them off in the open. There the two privates waited with clenched teeth for the expected attack. Five minutes passed without further sign of the enemy than a few groans from behind the mound. Elliot decided to crawl round and make observations; he returned on foot with the intelligence that the enemy were gone, leaving two dead and Old White-Frock either dead or seriously wounded.

"I am dying, my lads," moaned Captain Germaine, "I want some one to send word to Miss Helen Purdon—that I found—traces of her father. He is alive. You—in my pocket-book."

The last words came with a gasp and the captain never spoke again.

The information thus tragically conveyed thrilled Elliot through and through. He felt that now Helen's father was so near being restored to her he was justified in searching the officer's pocket-book for further information that might lead to the rescue of Professor Purdon.

He thrust aside his scruples and made a search among the few papers contained in that book. He found a torn slip with a few words written in English; they were a warning to the British commander and they were signed "J. Purdon."

He was interrupted in his reading by Baker saying that they ought to do something for poor Old White-Frock, who was groaning at the back.

Elliot told him to look after the old man for a minute and explained that he knew Miss Helen Purdon and was as anxious to see if anything could be done to rescue her father. He had another paper in his hand on which the captain had scribbled a few notes.

"How is it that a man who does wrong so often makes notes or does something else equally silly that betrays him?" Elliot asked himself. "It is clear from this that Germaine, having picked up by some chance the note written by Purdon, deliberately left camp—practically deserted, in fact, for the time—in order to trace the Professor, rescue him, and so secure Helen and her money!"

Elliot tore up the incriminating paper. He had no doubt of the captain's intentions after reading the paper, and the fact that Germaine had never said anything about Purdon's written warning was proof of those intentions.

"The old fellow is dead," said Baker, coming back at this moment. "And I'm jiggered if his body isn't white, after all, and look what he was wearing round his neck!"

It was a locket, a very small one, and inside was a portrait of a woman who might well have been mistaken for Helen Purdon.

It was more than a month later when Helen received that locket from Elliot Standring, giving her certain details about her father's fate and the place where he was buried. And it was four months later still when Standring, having been invalided home, was installed in the residence of Miss Purdon and placed under the charge of Mr. Carter and a trained nurse, who received occasional assistance from Helen herself.

"My poor father must have been taken prisoner, and captivity turned his brain," said Helen sadly. "He retained just sufficient sense to know, or to think that it would be best for the British to retire, and so he warned them every now and then, or tried to. Probably the Arabs found it convenient to let him do so—or superstitious fear of mad people prevented them from stopping him. I told Captain Germaine of the task to be undertaken by the man who loved me, and I never saw him again. His being taken prisoner led to the discovery of my father, so I owe him a debt of gratitude in an indirect way. Don't you think that it was the Arabs who shot my poor father and not Captain Germaine?"

"Very probable," replied Elliot, although he knew that it was not so. "But in any case Captain Germaine was endeavouring to escape and if his bullet struck your father, he did not know that it was Professor Purdon. Of that I am convinced."

The last words were uttered sincerely, and Helen was satisfied.

"Did you—did you love him?" asked Elliot. His voice betrayed his agitation, and his eyes showed how much the answer to that question meant to him.

"No," returned Helen, after a moment's reflection.

"And do you think that you might be able to love me in time."

"Yes," was the immediate reply.

And Elliot's cup of happiness was filled.

GEORGE KNIGHT.

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WITH TODGERS BY TANDEM.

THE weather really had been trying, and not being particularly busy, Todgers did not have so much difficulty as he might have had in persuading me to run down to his place for a day or two, and spend a brief season in the charmingly rural spot in which he has fixed himself.

Todgers is a deaf old fool—I beg pardon! I mean a highly respectable gentleman of middle age who is a bit uncertain in his hearing and a trifle erratic in his dealings, so I was not at all surprised, when, just as I had got dressed and ready to set off, he hurried up to my place, as a sort of afterthought, with a parrot in a cage, a tandem, and an entirely new programme of events.

The tandem Todgers had bought; the parrot was a present from an admiring colleague, and under the stress of necessity, or at all events anxiety, to get them home together Todgers, thought he might ride the one and between us carry the other.

"It's only forty miles or so, and you're fond of cycling," Todgers urged. "It will be a lovely spin too; just nice and fresh, and with a moon for the last part in all probability. It will save you a fare, too," he added wistfully.

It did seem rather enticing bar the parrot. I knew the parrot must come my way because I have never steered a tandem in my life, and it was obvious that the parrot must go with the rear rider.

"It looks a bit threatening," I objected, meaning the weather. For the sun had set in a sullen red glare, and the close heavy atmosphere suggested a thunderstorm.

"Oh, that's nothing," protested Todgers when I could make him grasp the nature of my objection.

"Wait till you get clear of London you'll find the country lanes as fresh and cool as a dewdrop."

Well to cut the story short I eventually agreed, and fixing up my trousers with the customary steel springs, and substituting a soft felt for the more conventional hat I had intended going down in, I reduced my luggage to pocket proportions and went swinging down the road on the back seat of Todgers' tandem.

Steadying the parrot's cage on the end of the handlebar, we went out on the Ongar Road turning off to the right before the town was reached into a series of cross-country roads that would bring us out below Chelmsford.

It was a pitch dark night and ominously still and heavy, but I knew the home country by heart, and Todgers knew it thoroughly beyond the Eastern Counties Road, so that was no great matter.

In default of conversation rendered impossible by reason of my companion's deafness, Todgers sang and smoked, and all was peace and happiness, and joy, when a sudden gust of wind came tearing down the road and took my hat with it as it passed me.

"Half-a-mo', old man," said I cheerfully, "my hat's gone overboard."

Todgers was in the middle of the *Beggar's Opera*, but I thought he heard me and came off on the pedal, we were going fairly leisurely when the opportunity offered.

The tandem went on with Todgers still carolling on it.

Even then the position didn't strike me, and I stood in the middle of the road, hatless, with the parrot's cage in my hand and smiled good humouredly at the thought of Todgers' surprise when he found I was missing—if he does discover it, and the smile suddenly faded out as I reflected on this not at all impossible contingency. Todgers is a steady old slogger of the get-the-machine-along-somehow order, and when I came to think of it there was no reason why he shouldn't keep going until Galleywood Hill forced him out of the saddle. If the machine went a bit stiff on the upgrades he would merely throw an expostulation at my supposed laziness, and knowing his own infirmity would take my answer for granted. All this crossed my mind in a flash, and long before the tandem had faded from sight I was tearing madly down the road yelling "Todgers, Hi! Todgers!! Tod—gers!!!"

I think I should have done it had not wretched luck put the silly, incompetent, careless cuckoo on an inviting slope just as I was drawing up to him, and away went tandem and Todgers and all, to be seen no more by me until day was far advanced.

"Well, I'll save my hat, anyway," I reflected, and retraced my steps, scanning the road and the adjacent hedges as I walked. It was sheer waste of energy and I might have known that it was absurd to look, in a pitchy darkness, for a hat that may be anywhere on a quarter of a mile of country lanes, with the unknown quantity of agricultural land adjoining, with matches which the wind extinguished as soon as they were lit. It was a good hat, seven and sixpence good, and I didn't care about losing it. At the end of half-an-hour's irritation and disappoint-

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ment I didn't care if I didn't see it again, and picking up the cage I swung off hatless in the direction of Chelmsford to the accompaniment of rolling peals of thunder and strong gusts of wind that betokened something unpleasant to follow.

Half-a-mile further on heavy splashes of rain began to hit my bare head, and I thought some hard things about Todgers and his wretched old tandem as I turned up my trouser-legs and put on the pace a bit. I could only locate my position vaguely, but at the best I knew it was a good three miles from any sort of shelter, and that of the crudest and most uninviting description.

The bird and cage, too, were a serious handicap for a three mile sprint on a muddy road, and I found fresh cause of offence in Todgers for having saddled me with them. It was unreasonable of me, perhaps, but at such times things do get a bit distorted in one's mind, and no amount of logic just then would have induced me to acknowledge that Todgers couldn't just as well have taken that bit of his own property along with the rest of the outfit.

I put on a pipe and marched savagely along in what was now a heavy downpour, and refused to see the humorous side of the situation even when the parrot, which had been singularly meditative up to then, suddenly woke up under the influence of the drenching, and squawked:

"Oh, lor, it's raining!"

A couple of miles of heavy trudging brought me to a finger-post which by the fitful aid of a match informed me that Chelmsford lay off on the left.

That sounded hopeful provided that it didn't lay too far off, and that there were no bewildering cross turnings in which I knew, by painful experience, a man could very completely and satisfactorily lose himself for hours at a stretch, even in broad daylight.

I began to think that this fate had overtaken me, when, after walking for what seemed to me a long drawn out century or so, I came upon a little wayside pub. A man was standing at the door smoking, and to him I went in the hope of getting some useful topographical information.

"Chelmsford, sir, why you're in it, or you will be in five minutes," said he.

It was then, my watch informed me, close on ten, and I wasn't as satisfied as I might have been considering that the rain had blown over, and a fitful watery moon, the moon of which Todgers had so blithesomely spoken, robed in dreary mist, was shining through the storm driven clouds.

For one thing I was too damp and muddy to be quite comfortable; for another I distrusted my chances of a train that night to anywhere within measurable distance of Todgers' place.

It is true that I might have got one to town and gone home, but I didn't think of that. One never does think of the obvious somehow.

It was as bad as I had anticipated. I couldn't get anything at all without going back along the line to Shenfield. I could do that in three-quarters-of-an-hour if I cared to; but that was as far as the railway people could assist me until morning.

Under those conditions, needless to say I didn't care to avail myself of the Great Eastern Railway Co's services, and I went round, parrot and all, and banged up the keeper of a cycle emporium.

A lady came to the door after a quarter of an hour's more or less patient persistence on my part with knocker and bell and to her I explained my unhappy case.

She said she was very sorry for me, but they had lost one machine that way last week, and in the absence of the proprietor she didn't care about risking another. She was back in her own domain again before the full nature of this rebuff dawned on me.

When it did, I felt a trifle more savage and a good bit wilted; but it doesn't do to be too easily discouraged, so I braced myself up and set off in search of a more obliging and confiding cycle-monger.

By the time I had found one it was close on eleven; but I did find one, and while he was preparing the mount I managed to procure something useful and sustaining in the way of refreshment. When I got back I found the man waiting with the machine all ready. I was to be very careful of it, and return it by the first train in the morning because they wanted to hire it out, and business was brisk and machines scarce in the town.

I thought from the man's tone that he was intrusting me with something of quite the latest and most up-to-date pattern in bicycles.

"It isn't a free-wheel, is it?" I inquired casually, wishing to be informed.

"Not altogether," said the man significantly. "But your five bob won't go far to cover the cost, and I've got the number in case——"

Really this was rather mortifying. I suppose it was my hatless and draggled condition that inspired this embarrassing distrust; but it flattened me so completely that I hadn't the spirit to make even a cursory examination of the hired mount. I was glad to just get in the saddle and ride away, cage and all, into the outer blackness where my appearance might pass without comment, or at least I should not be compelled to stay and listen.

It didn't take me long to discover that I was mounted on a veritable old crock, and I picked up some more information regarding it as I went along. Up Baddow Hill a suggestive and well-defined squeak disclosed itself. It went off with painful monotony—two squeaks to the yard. And every time it squeaked the parrot—a singularly apt and intelligent bird for its age, shouted: "Coming, Jane, coming."

I don't know which got on my nerves the more, the squeak or the remark. I laughed when I first heard it and foolishly encouraged the lopsided, heavy-witted fowl by telling her, or him, that it was a "pretty poll." Half-an-hour later, toiling up Danbury Hill at a three-mile-an-hour gait in a gloomy and discontented frame of mind, I told it to shut up with suppressed ferocity.

On the hill I made some more discoveries about my hired mount, including the fact that the left crank was loose, the back tyre was flat as a flounder, and that I hadn't a pump or a spanner or a drop of oil with me. The machine was just a bare frame, bar the saddle and lamp. It hadn't even a bell on it.

Dropping the hill from Danbury at sixteen miles an hour, it was a ripper to go on the down grade. I discovered that it was a brakeless as well, and then to my exceeding horror the handles swerved and came away bodily, and the bicycle with the parrot and cage and myself on top of all rode slap into a mountainous mass of blue cloth and a bull's-eye and sat down in an undigested heap in the muddy roadway.

The policeman—it was a policeman, of course! Those fellows are always about when you don't want them—was furious. He began by telling me that I was riding without a light. I knew that as well as he did, seeing that the wretched bit of tinware went black and useless

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on Danbury Hill, and I had neither matches nor oil with which to start it going again.

Then he discovered that I hadn't a bell and made an anthem out of that. Moreover I was riding a brakeless machine at a furious rate to the danger of the public, and refused to stop when warned by the police.

"Oh lor'," squawked that fool of a parrot, "it's raining."

This drew the policeman's attention to my luggage.

"Ah! You must come with me, my man," said he pompously. "There's been a lot of this sort of thing about here lately, and I fancy I know just where that parrot would feel at home if he was put there."

"Don't be a fool, policeman," said I irritably, for really I was getting a bit tired of the persistent ill-luck which was dodging me. "The bird belongs to a friend of mine. We left London this evening on a tandem," etc.

I summed up the whole affair as concisely and clearly as I knew how, but the man wasn't satisfied. He said it sounded a bit thin and repeated his invitation to accompany him so pressingly and insistently that to save trouble I accepted it and went.

It wasn't a dignified or an enjoyable walk. The cage and the bicycle were both pretty badly bent up so that the parrot had to lean back and twist his neck at an angle in order to stand upright, and I had to shove the machine along on the front wheel after the manner of a wheelbarrow.

I offered to toss the policeman for the choice of jobs; but he was surly and wouldn't respond. He even refused to carry the parrot at first until I said I should sit down in the road with the whole giddy outfit until he fetched an ambulance or something if he didn't do his share.

I was sorry I couldn't shove the bicycle off on him; but as the parrot picked a hole in his regulation breeches and nipped him by the leg twice, each time compelling him to drop the cage and dance about the road in a frenzy of pain and ill-temper, I did pretty well by the arrangement, and found some solace as a set off to my manifold miseries. I quoted poetry to him:

> How joyous the lot of a policeman must be,
> When he dances at night in his innocent glee.

But he was not responsive even to poetry. We walked along together in silence after that for perhaps half-a-mile, and then an idea occurred to me.

"Do you know a Mr. Todgers?" said I.

"A dear old chap what lives down Burnham way?" said the policeman. "Yes, I know him."

"So do I," I retorted. "That's his parrot you are carrying, and it is mainly because of his deafness that you are carrying it."

"Well, I'm sorry if I have made a mistake, sir," said he. "But you were riding without a light."

"Owing to circumstances over which I had no control," I said.

"And you bowled me over," he continued.

"At half-a-crown per bowl," said I

"And spoilt my clothes," said he.

"At half-a-crown per spoil," said I.

The policeman smiled broadly.

"But I had better go with you, perhaps," I continued. The policeman's face dropped again. "Because I have no lamp and I am afraid the bike is past riding."

"They're mending the road a bit on ahead, sir, and the chap there will give you a drop of oil," said the policeman. He was keen to do business, and I hadn't the heart to disappoint him.

In the cheery glare of the watchman's fire I managed to unship the crank and straighten it enough to make the machine rideable, and with a fill of paraffin for my lamp I rode off with renewed hope and a depleted pocket to cover the last stage of my journey.

Considered from a financial standpoint I hadn't effected very much saving in taking the trip by road; but I had to confess that I had got a great deal more for my money than I should have had had I expended it on a railway ticket.

I struck Todgers' place at 1.30 in the morning, and found Mrs. Todgers up and anxious.

"Oh! you've come," said she a trifle coldly. "I began to think something must have happened. Where's Henry?"

"A great deal has happened, Mrs. Todgers," said I. "In fact I have never known so much detail to be crowded into a brief forty-mile spin before, but you don't mean to say that your husband hasn't turned up. Why I left him nine hours ago—or rather he left me—the other side of Chelmsford, taking the only means of locomotion available with him."

"Those wretched bicycles!" ejaculated the lady in alarm.

"I do hope nothing has happened to him. He sent me a wire this afternoon to say he was bringing you down, and I have seen nothing or heard nothing of him since."

I didn't want to go; in fact, I felt then as though I didn't care if I never saw a bicycle again; but Mrs. Todgers was so manifestly uneasy that I really had no alternative. I was able to mount myself decently from Todgers' outfit in bicycles, and to rid myself of that wretched bird-cage, that was one and about the only consolation I could obtain, and advising the lady of the house to go to bed, I set off in search of my host.

There was a choice of roads and I took what I considered to be the most likely one. Ten minutes after I had gone Todgers arrived.

There was a choice of roads and he took what he considered the most likely and followed me, when he found out how matters stood from his wife, with a kindly-intentioned, but injudicious desire to save me any further exertion on his account.

I got as far as the Yarmouth Road without gaining any tidings of the missing tandem, and being completely knocked up, then rode into Chelmsford and finished the night at the "Clarendon."

I got back to Todgers' place in the morning almost about the time that Todgers reached my place in the suburbs, and we met half-way again by telegraph arrangement, when our respective whereabouts could be made known to each other, and performed the journey together this time in safety and with some degree of enjoyment.

"Mrs. Todgers," said I at dinner that evening. "Harry is an excellent fellow in every respect, but if you go out on that tandem with him I should advise you to tie a string to his arm and to keep a tight grip on the end of it."

Mrs. Todgers laughed and assured me that if ever she did go on that or any other tandem with her husband she would certainly bear my advice in mind, but her tone suggested that Todgers' companion in life was not at all likely to be his companion on a tandem, and after my experience I could only commend her wisdom.

R. ANDOM.

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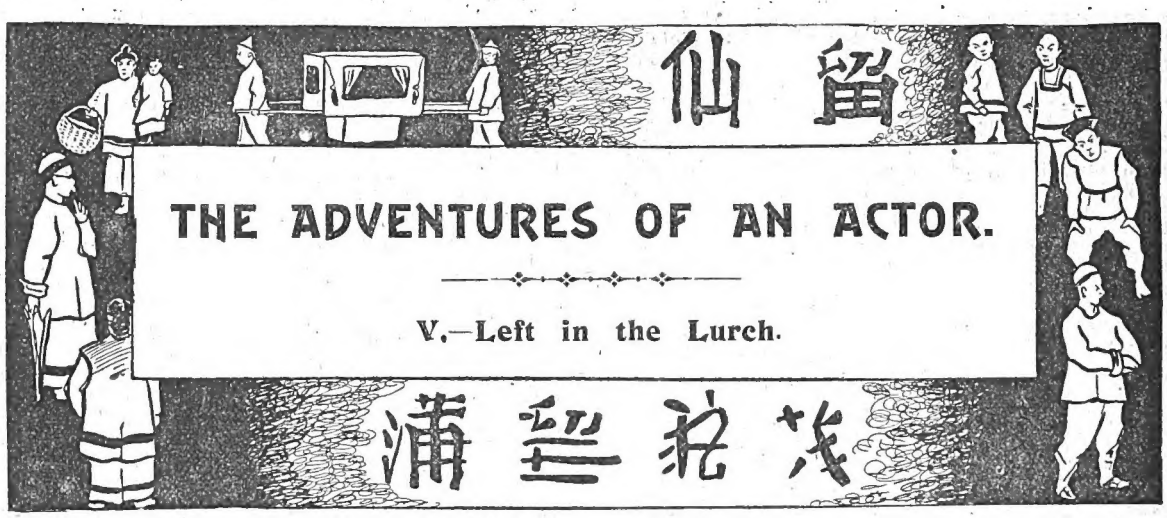

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTOR.

V.—Left in the Lurch.

THOUGH Sebastian Baggalle had a fine presence, and at first glance almost a noble face, his hooked nose gave him a sinister appearance, and upon closer acquaintance one discovered something of the mind that lay behind his deep-set, restless and cunning eyes. When he liked he had a certain charm and insinuation of manner that was almost irresistible.

The association that existed between him and his adopted son, an uninteresting and conventional youth who had the appearance of a counter-jumper, was often a subject of discussion and wonder. The only bond that appeared to exist between them was, common cause in roguery.

After a disastrous tour through Ireland, Baggalle had brought the poor remains of his company to the town of Huddleton, in the faint hope of it being a turning point in his fortunes. Hope was a thing of the past to his despairing company, but Baggalle it never left so long as he was associated with change.

Money he had none, and I doubt if the sum of five shillings could have been raised from the lot of us. He had booked the Town Hall to open on the last two nights of the week. It was now Monday, and we had the first four days of the week to work up the business, and live on credit.

Baggalle, nothing daunted, set out early in the morning to get bills printed, and the few miscellaneous lithos and posters we still possessed, stuck up on the hoardings. The first point of his attack was the principal hotel in the town. We three walked into the saloon bar.

There he tried his blandishments upon the barmaid, but she was out of temper that morning, and proof against his insinuating manner. He ordered two glasses of beer, on the pretence of it being too early in the morning for him to drink, and shared them with us when no one was looking.

We did not stay long for not a grain of information concerning the town could we gain from the surly barmaid, she even refused to sell tickets for us at a percentage.

By that strange absent-mindedness so often to be found associated with genius, Baggalle forgot to pay for our refreshment, and had to be called back to do so.

"That woman's a fool," said Baggalle reflecting upon her business capacity, as we walked across the market square.

"If you had only paid her before she would have been all right, she was not the kind that forget with the help of a ticket," replied Alfred.

"You are quite right, my boy, quite right, you are the saving of your old father, you have more insight though not the same address as I have."

Next we turned our attention to a printer.

Baggalle asked to see specimens.

"Certainly," said he, "what kind?"

"Some daybills, programmes; about fifty double crowns, and a few streamers."

"And the matter, sir?"

"Here is a copy of the programme and daybill matter. For the double crowns, let me see. Be good enough to take down the following: Town Hall, Huddleton. Special attractions for Friday and Saturday nights, October 5th and 6th. Mr. Sebast an Baggalle's Company of first-class Artistes. My name large type. Most expensive engagement of Alfred Baggalle—very large type—the great comedian—large type, next line. Under the patronage of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, Lord Heworth, and the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. Then follow the daybill please."

Alfred nudged his father.

"It's all right, my boy, it's all right; old friends of mine, all promised to come," replied Baggalle to the nudge, "and what will that amount to, Mr. Printer?"

"£1 18s. 6d., say £1 18s.," said the printer, reckoning the amount up.

"Humph! yes, will you be good enough to present your little bill on Friday night, at the box-office."

"I am very sorry, sir, we don't do business that way, our terms are strictly cash," said the printer firmly.

"Just as you please, it is all one to me," replied Baggalle, putting his hand in his pocket and drawing therefrom several packets of tickets; "there are ten three shilling tickets, and four two shilling tickets, you will have no difficulty in selling them I am sure. Any you fail to part with I will buy back from you."

The printer was staggered at Baggalle's effrontery, and it was some moments before he spoke.

"Mr. Baggalle, you are trying to make a fool of me I think."

"I assure you, sir, I never attempt a task already accomplished," replied Baggalle, seeing the game was up. "And allow me to tell you, sir, I did not come here to be insulted, so I withdraw my order. Good morning!"

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With which we all sailed out of the shop, leaving the printer speechless with surprise.

When we got out into the street, Alfred burst out laughing and slapping Baggalle on the back, exclaimed :

"You are a card, father, you ought to be a member of parliament," which pleased the old man mightily.

We soon found another printer, who being in a small way of business, was readily impressed with Baggalle, and did not at all mind waiting until Friday night for his bill.

Then we entered a large grocer's sh p, where Baggalle made himself very entertaining, keeping the manager and shop-assistants in a ripple of laughter with his jokes, and genial manner, while he gave a large order.

The parcel was packed and under Alfred's arm before he paid for it with the tickets. The manager made some demur about it not being usual, but Baggalle carried his point with a high hand, promising to buy back any he did not dispose of.

After a call upon the bill-poster, and another to secure the services of a pianist, we made our way to the Town Hall where I demanded a division of the groceries for the benefit of the Company. Baggalle and Alfred protested, but at the threat of a strike, they gave in with a bad grace.

O'Connor, our beer-soaked Irish heavy man, met us at the hall entrance. He looked ill at ease, and fidgeted in a nervous manner.

I knew what was the matter with him; he had borrowed a penny (a bad habit of his) probably off the hall-keeper, and was searching for some one to extract another from.

He drew me aside at the first opportunity, and began with the usual formula.

"Can ye lind me a penny, I've gone and left all me money at home in me ould coat" (he only had one) "and I feel a bit queer in me inside; and I find I only have a penny in my pocket."

I had often been caught before by this incurable, but repetition had made me wary. I declared to my sorrow I had not a stiver. But on his asking me if I had anything portable to pawn, I told him to clear out. He borrowed that penny shortly afterwards, and went to a public-house.

Miss Dellow, who played our old woman, then buttonholed me, and demanded to know all we had done and what we hoped and feared.

Miss Dellow was a person of past triumphs in the dramatic world. We took her word for it, as the per od to which she constantly referred was too remote for us to know anything about. Habit is strong.

Without waiting for me to reply to her questions, she at once began to tell me what she had been used to, and what she had not, and how Mr. X. Y. Z. had, after her performance of Ophelia, twenty years ago, told her he had never seen such acting before, and predicted a future for her.

I was in no mood for reminiscences that morning, so reminding Miss Dellow that we all had futures of some kind, unless we died young, left her abruptly.

Baggalle and Alfred had gone out to work up the business, and to try the effect of tickets on a local butcher or so. Deputing our baggage man, now risen to the dignity of an actor, to shadow them and demand on behalf of the company an equal share of the spoils, I called for our leading lady, and together we went for a ramble out into the beautiful country round about Huddleton. There we picked great bunches of flowers, ate blackberries, and forgot our troubles for a few hours, in rest and peace.

Friday night found us all in the highest spirits, for the house on opening contained about £12 and afterwards rose to £15. We proceeded to give our audience *East Lynne* played by six people.

Baggalle did not play, the taking of money in the front of the house was too important a duty to sacrifice to art.

Doubles such as Miss Cornelia and Barbara, Richard Hare and Bullock, were plentiful, and we flattered ourselves were successful in all instances except the extraordinary English of the baggage man who gave a unique rendering of Lord Mountsevern and Justice Hare.

Little Willie was played by a local child, and although she could not be heard over the footlights, she was received with great enthusiasm, and I am sure was responsible for half the house. We thought we were doing well; the audience did not, they could see there was something wrong, and in the second act began to murmur.

Where were the nobility and gentry, and the Mayor, was asked in whispers on all sides. By the end of the second act, they fully realised they had been hoaxed, and showed their resentment in increased noise.

Deputies from the Mayor and Aldermen were waiting on Baggalle in the front of the house, demanding an explanation of the bill matter. Baggalle made them some temporary excuse, and bade them wait, for we had sent round for him.

The aud ence were causing us extreme uneasiness. No one paid any attention to the play, which could not be heard. Shouts of "Where's the Mayor?" "Where's Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Cole?" "Where's Lord Heworth?" reached us from the audience.

We were at our wit's end to know what to do, but bravely went on with our lines until Baggalle arrived on the scene. He walked straight on the stage and addressed the audience.

The fire of indignation in his eyes was well simulated considering the way he had fooled the poor folk in front of him who greeted him with hoots, yells, and hisses. He raised his hand and thundered:

"Silence!"

The dramatic action took effect and thus he addressed them:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I must say your conduct is at least extraordinary, I have always heard the people of Huddleton described as a most just and fair audience. I have endeavoured to give you a good entertainment," here cries of "Where's Mr. Mulligan and Mr. Cole?" "Where's Lord Heworth?" "Where's Doherty? You are a fraud," and others less polite, interrupted him.

He continued after they had subsided.

"If any of you here are dissatisfied with this entertainment, they shall have their money returned to them at the conclusion of this act, on condition they remain quiet until then."

This announcement was well received, and Baggalle left the stage amid applause and cheers.

The audience remained quiet during the rest of the third act, and the curtain came down with hearty applause. And as we could not see much movement, except at the end of the Hall, we hoped they had decided to remain.

We rang up the curtain again after a ten minutes' interval to find the audience not apparently diminished in numbers. Our joy thereat was short lived, for anon there came from them once more murmurs and hootings growing louder every moment.

We sent round O'Connor to see what was the matter. He came back with the news that Baggalle was nowhere

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to be found. Where was Alfred? was our first thought.

We made a search, and discovered him sneaking towards the back door, with a big parcel of clothes under his arm. Then the horrible truth flashed upon us. Baggalle had flown with the entire receipts, and by now had had time to have left the town.

Just then all but O'Connor were wanted on the stage. He took the matter into his own hands, and pounced upon Alfred with a wild yell. They had a battle royal in the passage, but ordinary muscle proving of better quality than the beer-soaked variety, Alfred escaped, leaving O'Connor and his parcel lying together on the ground.

Upon recovery O'Connor immediately seized upon that parcel as his own. It represented to him liquid consolation for his injuries. We could not spare anyone to chase Alfred, for the audience were getting more and turbulent, a bold front and a continuance of the play was needed to keep them from further excesses.

O'Connor, whose one thought as a rule was beer, now proved the most resourceful of anyone of us. He ordered the baggage man to fish out a revolver from the property basket, and fill it with blank cartridges. Sticking the weapon in his pocket he said:

"I know the temper of the bastes in this district, I've been round here before."

The hall was sometimes used as a night-school. A quantity of books to aid these nocturnal studies, were piled up in a couple of deep window ledges at the bottom of the hall. The gods in exposition of their renowned temper seized upon these, and sought revenge, for being doubly fooled, by hurling them at us.

"Haul down the curtain," everyone cried, but the hall-keeper who had experienced the effect of a Huddletonian audience's displeasure before, affirmed they would ransack the place, back and front, and probably maul us if we did.

"Let 'em have their game," said he.

It is no joke to be with devils at play, thought we. As most of the flying books fell short, we did not budge, but later one well-directed shot caught our hired pianist on the head, and he scuttled out of the hall like a rabbit with shot in his tail.

Roars of laughter followed his disappearance, and with a loud shout they followed the leadership of a self-constituted captain, and jumping the barrier, made a dash for us full of grim Huddletonian humour. O'Connor was equal to the occasion.

"Take every one up to the top dressing-room," he commanded, and springing on to the stage he covered our retreat by levelling his revolver at the foremost of the mob, shouting, "back ye divils, I'll put a bullet through the first that comes forward, before he's time to move a step."

For the moment they hesitated at this piece of checkmate humour. But their leader, nothing daunted, exclaimed:

"Never fear, boys. If he fires the pistol it won't harm us for there's sorra a cartridge in it. Come on, boys."

They surged forward again; O'Connor fired, they halted abruptly, and looked serious.

"I've missed ye this time, but the next time I'll hit," he threatened.

Whether, after this demonstration of force, O'Connor, with his Irish eloquence could not have explained matters, and pacified them we were never to know, for the hall-keeper, contrary to his own advice, here lowered the curtain.

Emitting curses, loud and deep, O'Connor made with all haste for the top dressing-room with the mob at his heels. Placing the ladies in the room, we three fellows made a hurried barricade on the landing at the top of the stairs.

Everything that was portable we brought to cast on the heads of our assailants, reserving as a final coup a couple of heavy trunks to roll down the stairs. It was not long before they discovered us.

"Here they are," the leader cried, "go for 'em, boys."

Once more O'Connor's revolver came into requisition and held the foremost at bay while he addressed them.

He explained at length how we had been cheated as much as they; in conclusion asking them to go quietly home. Their answer to his eloquence was a shower of stones and books, and an attempted rush up the stairs.

We replied with heavier articles; O'Connor fired his revolver and they fell back. Then the battle began in real earnest, they made no attempt to storm our position, a spirited exchange of missiles was the order of the attack.

We had the advantage in position, but they had it in ammunition. Sticks and stones came flying about our heads. We let them have all back that remained with us, in addition anything we could lay hands on.

The ladies, nerved to the occasion, supplied us with bottles, glasses, brushes, boots, and even cakes of soap to cast on their heads.

The damage on their side we could only estimate from oft recurrent curses. On our side besides minor injuries, O'Connor had his left arm temporarily paralysed, and the baggage man his cheek cut open with a stone.

The time came when our ammunition ran short, and even the trunks had been rolled down to drive back the more daring of our assailants.

The mob were quick to see their advantage, and swarmed up the stairs. On the top stair we stood, and engaged them hand to hand, belabouring and thrusting them with iron scenery braces which did telling work.

This could not last for long we knew, a few minutes more and we should have been at their mercy, when the cry of "Police" burst from their midst, and the last I remember was a breaking up of the mass as I fell stunned from a blow on the head.

When I opened my eyes I found myself lying on a couch in a surgery with someone bathing my head. Roars of laughter proceeded from a corner of the room.

Turning my eyes in that direction I saw O'Connor with his arm in a sling giving a graphic account of the fray to the doctor, who was sewing up the baggage man's cheek. Our wounds proved our saving.

The doctor turned out a brick. He became so interested in us that with the help of the Mayor, and other influential people of the town, we got up a show a week later; this time with their genuine patronage.

Our fame spread and the whole town turned out to see us. Not only did we pay Baggalle's debts, but left the place with our pockets well lined.

The back seats greeted our reappearance with ringing cheers.

They were all agreed that we had given them better fun even than could be got out of an election.

I have lately heard that Baggalle and Alfred now own a booth in the north of Scotland, and there flourish like the green bay-tree.

DOUGLAS VIGORS.

[Next Week: "JOHN HANSON'S REVENGE."]

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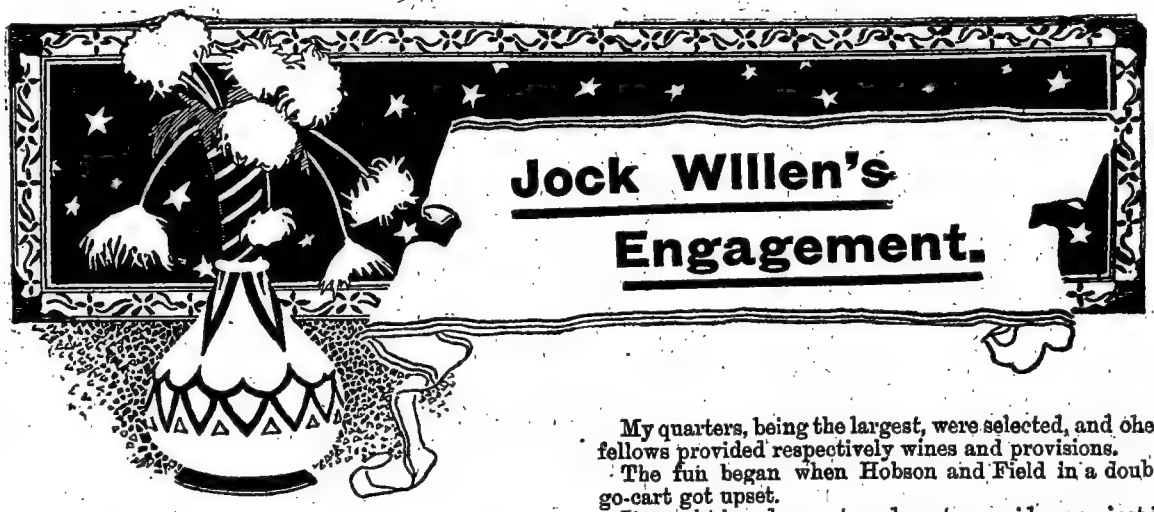

Jock Willen's Engagement.

For a right-down, rollicking, good dinner party give me a "Coaster!"

They may do themselves well in other parts of the world, but on the Gold Coast we simply don't draw the line anywhere. A first-class native cook can give any Frenchman points, and when we've got the wine—well, we don't put it away to improve the quality.

I've enjoyed a good many jolly dinners in my time, but I never met with anything yet to beat a regular Accra "send off"; though it may have been partly owing to the fits of the blues one gets there, and the reaction afterwards.

But we had a good many "send offs." If a chap was at all popular, when he went home on leave he was certain to get one, and if he had a birthday, or if he only said he had, it was much the same.

Bank Holidays were godsends, and if we could slip one in, sort of unawares, well, we always did. On national festivals we lost our heads, both figuratively and literally sometimes.

But the best I ever remember was the one we gave Jock Willen when he got engaged.

Jock was the most popular man on the Coast; from Sierra Leone to Calabar there was not a better fellow, and when he gave it out that he was engaged, all the chaps in the place wanted to give him the dinner.

Perhaps one cause of eagerness was the dearth of excuses that had recently prevailed. No one had done anything, there was no holiday coming, and we hadn't even had a funeral. After the last named I must tell you, we always had a dinner to keep our spirits up, as melancholia not unusually breeds fever.

A few months before we had had a regular harvest over the Ashanti business, as each Accra officer had to be "sent off" individually, but since then there had been a dearth.

We had only celebrated Halwell's old aunt's death when he got a legacy, the Governor's departure up country, and Beston's dog's puppies. (One of the latter was missing, and we found out afterwards it had been served up as a *hors d'œuvres*.)

No one could think of a reason for the next big "do" until Jock said he was engaged, and then everybody wanted to be host. At least everybody wanted to have it in his quarters, but they didn't exactly mean providing everything. In the end we divided the honours.

My quarters, being the largest, were selected, and the fellows provided respectively wines and provisions.

The fun began when Hobson and Field in a double go-cart got upset.

It caught in a deep rut, and went over sideways, just in front of my digs, and as several of us were watching from the balcony, they received a perfect fire of chaff.

We sat down twelve, and the noise increased gradually all through dinner. I had a surprise for them at the last, in the form of a real home-made Christmas pudding, that had come all the way from England. I had had two, and on Christmas Day, Medway, my partner in quarters, and I finished up one, after burning it in good old style.

Evidently our cook had seen the display, for when at last the pudding was triumphantly brought in, it was blazing away in fine fashion. I must confess I was a little surprised, but all the fellows looked pleased, and it was quickly divided round.

The first three men who took a mouthful, sprang up with a howl and everyone looked at me. To show there was no ill feeling, I took a mouthful myself—and howled likewise.

The cook had lighted the pudding by first soaking it in kerosene.

When the hubbub had subsided we got to the speeches; and if speeches ever made a man happy, Jock ought to have been the most absurdly happy man in the world. We wished him everything anybody could think of, to the point or otherwise, and broke various glasses in emphasizing our feeling, and we all promised to go and stay with him indefinitely when he was married.

Jock replied in his usual tip-top style, and was finally dragged out on to the verandah, as the only means of stopping him, and comic songs became the order of the hour.

But before we all separated, those of us who were capable of gravity congratulated him again very seriously, for we were all honestly pleased—we liked him so much.

Jock was serious enough himself as he thanked us.

"I'm an awfully lucky beggar," he said, "when you've seen her you'll understand, and I hope you all will some day or other."

* * * * *

"You'll go and see Miss Fortescue as soon as possible, won't you?"

I was just getting into the surf-boat and Jock was wringing my hand.

I was going home on leave and he was following in a

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month, but I was the bearer of an important little package for his *fiancée*, who happened to live, as I did, in Liverpool.

"I'll go the day after I arrive," I promised him, "and if you don't look sharp and come back I expect I shall cut you out."

He laughed happily.

"Have a try, old chap," he said. "I'll give you half my next year's screw if you do."

"Taken," said I, as the boat pushed off.

He stood watching a bit longingly and waved his hat. I see him now in his light flannel suit, with the sun on his fair hair and a smile on his lips in spite of the longing in his eyes. The handsomest, jolliest, and best fellow I ever knew.

When I got to England I lost no time in carrying out my promise, and was on the doorstep of Miss Fortescue's home by eleven the next morning.

She greeted me delightedly, and asked eagerly for every detail of news concerning Jock. She made no pretence of indifference, and was not in the least ashamed of her eagerness. She asked me a hundred questions, and I answered them gladly, if only for the pleasure of watching her expressive face. She was one of the prettiest girls I ever saw, and, what was better still, she was as natural and unaffected as a child. I quite agreed with Jock that he was a lucky beggar and almost told her so.

"It is my birthday to-morrow," she said, "and we are having a little 'send off,' as you call them on the Coast, in view of my coming wedding. Will you come? It will be quite informal and rather lively."

I accepted readily and proceeded to tell her of the "send off" we had given Jock. She listened eagerly, and wished we could all be there the following day. She thought it was so good of us to like him so much, but confessed it was not at all surprising.

Her dinner was as great a success as his had been, and, in its way, quite as jolly. She was evidently as popular as he was, and everyone vied with everyone else in wishing her joy. Things certainly looked promising for the young couple so far as wishes went, though a fulfilment of them must necessarily have been Utopian.

I had reason to remember that dinner with more pleasure even than the rest, for not long afterwards I became engaged to Miss Fortescue's sister, whom I met for the first time.

The three of us were chatting apart when she told me not to tell the name of the boat Jock was coming in.

"I'm going to meet him alone," she said, "just as I started him. We wouldn't have anyone there but just our two selves, and we arranged then, that when he came back, I should be the first he should speak to, and no one was to look on. That is twelve months ago," she continued; "it looked like a century then, but now it seems more like a week. I feel ready to go out of my mind with sheer happiness."

"Don't do that," I said laughingly, "it would be so jolly rough on Jock. He'd think he ought to go out of his mind too, to keep you company."

The morning the ship was sighted at Anglesea, I met her on the landing-stage, looking radiant beyond words.

"It can't be in for some hours," she said, "but I'm going to wait because time goes quicker here than at home. They don't any of them know for certain, though of course they have their suspicions."

"When may I appear on the scenes?" I asked chaffingly.

"You can meet the tender," she replied, "but you mustn't come out on it," and I told her I would obey orders.

What happened then I must tell as it was told to me, by a man who went out to meet his brother.

"I noticed her directly," he said, "who could help it? Also, it was rather unusual for a pretty young girl like that to be going on the tender alone. I speculated idly as to whether she was meeting husband or lover. I thought it must be one of the two from the light in her eyes. When we approached the ship she leant eagerly over the rail, trying to make out the faces of those who were aboard her. I noticed she did not seem to recognise anyone, and when we drew up alongside, she had turned rather pale, but was still scanning the ship eagerly. Still no look of recognition crossed her face, and I began to feel quite sorry, for I thought her friend, whoever he was, must have missed the boat. In fact, I kept near her on purpose, out of curiosity, and was still beside her when a lady, with a kind sad face, came up and asked her if she was Miss Fortescue. She said 'yes' in rather a bewildered way, still looking round. I don't know what the lady said then, but I heard the words 'fever' and 'last night' and then I saw Miss Fortescue drop like a stone."

That was all, but to this day when I see, in my mind's eye, Jock standing waving his hat on the beach at Accra, and the sunshine in the girl's eyes on the landing-stage, I feel a cold shudder.

The rest seems too cruel to be true, but one quickly learns things are none the less true because of that.

G. E. PAGE.

A TEN-POUND LADY CORNERED AT LAST!

Since last week two more Sealed Envelopes have been claimed, the lucky captors being:

Mrs. Johnson, 1 Milton Avenue, East Ham,

who captured Ten-Pound Lady G,

Mr. F. W. Bull, 10 Kasghar Road, Plumstead,

who captured No. 54 at a football match at Woolwich.

£340 HAS NOW BEEN PAID AWAY,

and there are still fifty Sealed Envelopes awaiting claimants.

There are also ten Ten-Pound Ladies about the country anxious to get rid of their Sealed Envelopes. No gentleman need apply, as these Envelopes are for ladies only.

The celebrated song

"HAVE YOU GOT THAT £10 NOTE?"

is now on sale, and can be obtained from all newsagents for 1s. 4d., or direct from the SONG DEPARTMENT, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., for 1s. 6d. Postal Order (not stamps) post free.

DO YOU KNOW A GOOD STORY?

A prize of £10 is offered to the person from whom we receive the best anecdote relating to the Ten-Pound Scheme. All attempts should be sent in envelopes addressed: TEN-POUND STORY EDITOR, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C., by Monday next, Nov. 19th.

Full particulars of the Scheme will be sent on application to Room 36, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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THE CHINESE PIRATES OF SAIGON.

WHEN you have crossed the wide sea below Cochin China coming from the direction of Singapore, the first point of land you see is Point St. Jacques, a tall black cliff standing up from the sea, the furthest point of Cochin China below Saigon.

There are caves in the rocks where tigers live, and other caves where human tigers, called pirates, live.

People think, if they think on the matter at all, that pirates are by-gone creatures, that they do not exist now. They are less bold and powerful than they were fifty years ago, beyond a doubt: they do not dare to stop the big P and O's and North German Lloyd steamers that carry the mails, but it is still dangerous sailing these seas in smaller steamers.

Down the broad river mouths of Southern China where the low, flat marshes run back into the land, and where narrow creeks give easy cover, pirate junks lie hidden for days and weeks; no one disturbs these marshes, save an occasional French officer from Saigon or Tonkin, who has come out snipe shooting. Snipe are there in hundreds and wild fowl of many kinds, and there is also a chance of a tiger.

One broiling day in September a small trading schooner was crawling along a few miles from Point St. Jacques.

The owner had his wife and two children on board. They had been all the way to Colombo to get fresh stores to trade in amongst the Malay and Chinese in all the little villages and settlements about Cochin China. They did not attempt to trade in Singapore—the great shop of Little and Co. swamped smaller efforts there—or in Saigon either; no, they bought damaged goods cheap at Colombo and then they pottered round St. Jacques and the coast of Cochin and Siam, putting in at all the little villages and towns about.

Candles, cheese, tinned goods of all kinds and a lot of cheap whisky made up the cargo; cheese did not go bad in the intense heat, but only acquired an extra strong flavour, enough to make an Englishman feel unwell, but evidently much appreciated by the Chinese.

If it did happen to upset their inside arrangements, the whisky could be useful as an antidote. So Mr. Simpkins, the owner of the *Mary Ann*, felt himself provided at all points.

The family camped on deck in these latitudes, it was pleasanter for many reasons. Mr. Simpkins was smoking a pipe and sitting on a barrel, while Mrs. Simpkins was cooking the family supper, for it was getting on for seven o'clock. Joe and Matilda Simpkins were lying on the deck and kicking their heels in the air.

Joe was a sandy, nondescript kind of boy, about thirteen, with a turned up nose and freckles His sister was rather a pretty little thing, the sandy hair in her case had a quite golden tinge.

"What are we going to have for supper, 'Tilda?" said Joe.

"Fish curry," said Matilda sadly, "it's always fish in some way."

"Anything after?" asked Joe.

"Not as I knows on," said Matilda, "what a chance some folks have of enjoying themselves! There's Jane Brown, of Colombo, died the other day of eating ice cream on the top of hot puddin'."

"My," said Joe, enviously, "wot a lovely death!"

They were both gloomily silent for a short time—a silence broken by Mrs. Simpkins' voice calling them to the discussion of the despised curry.

The family sat round on the deck, with the curry on a large dish in the centre, from which it was ladled out by Mrs. Simpkins. All was peaceful and silent as the steamer glided through the oily water, a soft land breeze blew towards them, bearing the scent of spice-laden trees not far off, the Point of Saint Jacques towered above the small islands near.

"I always feel more happy-like when we've passed that there point," said Mr. Simpkins.

"Why, there ain't no pirates there now," said his wife, scornfully; "since Orang Kyah was smashed up, they haven't been seen about."

"That may be," said Mr. Simpkins oracularly, "but that don't prove that they ain't there, all the same. Also, Orang Kyah wasn't killed, he got away into the jungle, and there he is, you may take my word for it, awaiting his chance."

"Wot 'ud you do, father?" said Joe, "if he attacked the *Mary Ann*?"

"We'd do our best to defend her, o' course," said his father. "Tim and Mike would have to leave the injuns awhile, and I have a rifle apiece for us all, that may do some mischief."

"Lor!" said Joe, and relapsed into meditation, rather hoping the monotony of the voyage might be broken by a stirring incident.

Mrs. Simpkins and Matilda ate their supper undisturbed by these evil forebodings; there was no use in troubling one's mind over what might never happen.

"I hope they'll do some trading in the way of pine-apples and fresh vegetables in that there village not far round that corner, pirates or no pirates," said Mrs. Simpkins, practically; "the children are getting quite peaky and pale, for the want of fresh food."

"Well, we'll take a run near shore and see about it," said her husband, "we ought to get round the Point by eight o'clock."

The two engineers and general crew were to be seen popping their heads up through the hatchway, in a deprecating manner, meant to intimate to Mrs. Simpkins that it was time they also had a share of the fish curry, so with dispatch, taught by experience, she bundled off her family, swept up their plates, gave the latter a very perfunctory wash in a bucket, and then called up Tim and Mike to the festal board.

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Mr. Simpkins sauntered to the bow of the steamer and took a survey of St. Jacques through a spy-glass. They were getting very near the big black rocks now. Suddenly two black specks shot out from a distant creek, on the wrong side of the Point to the settlement where they meant to trade. These specks soon developed themselves into two canoes holding about eight men each, and heading straight for the trading steamer. Mr. Simpkins groaned, and put the glass in his pocket,

"'Tis them pirates, sure enough," he said, in deep disgust.

"All steam on," he shouted down the hatchway to the engine-room.

"She won't stand much more, sir, without bursting," one of the men called out.

"I can't help it, she must take her chance of that," Simpkins answered, resuming his look-out on the rowing boats which were approaching unpleasantly fast. But the engines at first answered to the extra call bravely, and the steamer shot through the water much faster than any boat could hope to do.

This lasted for fully five minutes, in which time they had made good headway round the point. Suddenly what the engineer prophesied happened—the poor worn-out machinery gave way, a piston broke, there was a great whirr and everything stopped. On the steamer there was a pause of blank dismay.

"We're done for now and no mistake," said the stoker; "comes of going to sea in an old hulk like this 'ere."

He and his companion came up on deck and stood looking at the boats which were coming up fast.

"Come down, my men, and get your guns and cutlasses," said Mr. Simpkins, "and let's put the best face on it we can; after all, they may only be boarding us to trade."

"We ain't got no chance if it comes to fightin'," said the stoker sulkily. He was a miserable looking creature who looked as if he principally subsisted on coal dust. "Why, there must be at least thirty men in them canoes, and Chinese Boxers at that."

"I don't mean to prevent their boarding us," said Mr. Simpkins, "it's best to take for granted they don't mean us harm, as we can't get out of their way. These weapons are only to make a show that we aren't quite defenceless. You stay down here, my dear," he said to his wife.

"Certainly not," she replied determinedly, "my place is up by you, Henry Simpkins, and there I mean to stand. Matilda will stay below, but I go up."

"Very well," said Simpkins resignedly, "it don't make much difference anyway; come up, then," and on deck they all went—accompanied by Joe, who first carefully placed his rifle in a secure hiding-place of his own, behind a barrel of cheese.

The canoes were now within hailing distance and Simpkins stood up, waving a white flag. The occupants of the canoes took no notice whatever of this, but came straight on to the steamer, which was stopped to receive them. The Chinamen hooked the canoes on to the side and all of them scrambled on deck, looking alarming enough with their great creeses and curved knives. The leader, who was armed with a musket, was a very fine specimen of a Southern Chinaman, very tall and well-built.

Mr. Simpkins advanced, smiling, and said a few words in Chinese intimating he was a trader and anxious to do business with them.

The leader laughed contemptuously and repeated Simpkins' remarks to his followers, who evidently looked on them as an excellent joke. However, they made no attempt to attack either the family or crew, who were all on deck with the exception of Matilda; this young person had hidden herself down below, as soon as she saw the natives actually coming on board. She went down to a great flour-bin in the pantry, about a quarter full of flour, and having with difficulty climbed over the edge by the help of a barrel near, she sank down in the soft, white mass, covering herself all over with it.

She and Joe had often used the flour-bin as a capital place for hide-and-seek, when empty, and they had bored several round holes for ventilation and points of look out, when the lid was shut, so there was no danger of her suffocation.

It was lucky for her she was well covered by the flour, for the natives turned over and prodded about everything in the store-room and pantry, before proceeding to the hold. The lid of the bin was lifted several times by first one pirate, then another, but in looking in, they only saw a dim white heap, which was so evidently flour that they troubled themselves no further about it.

In about half-an-hour the pirates all assembled again on deck, most of them affectionately carrying a bottle of whisky, and made a report on the contents of the steamer to their chief, who had remained above.

The rifles concealed under the sail had been very soon discovered, and many unpleasant glances cast towards the unfortunate owners, whose hopes of getting off scot-free, except for the loss of the cargo, were getting lower and lower. The chief seemed pleased with the account brought him of the stores on board, he grinned pleasantly; then, making a sign to his men, they proceeded to seize Mr. and Mr. Simpkins and tie them up to the masts, of which there were two. Simpkins tried to remonstrate, but the pirate chief had him gagged at once with a spare Union Jack, while a Stars and Stripes performed the same kind duty to his wife.

The two men were first tied up and then rolled overboard, an employment which seemed to cause the pirates much amusement.

Poor Joe was also tied up and shoved into an empty barrel, and the top fastened securely on—then rolled away into a corner, no doubt to afford entertainment later.

Luckily for him the barrel was an old one and cracked by the heat, so, though very stifling, it was possible to keep alive.

These little arrangements finished, the pirates prepared to enjoy themselves. Still more whisky was brought up and several tins of provisions, and they all lay about, luxuriously, eating and drinking, while darkness crept over the sky.

Whisky was no new thing to them, they had been accustomed to it for years, though it was seldom indeed that such a glorious supply as this came to hand.

Moreover, there was no hurry about the feast, they could lie there in happiness and peace, watching the golden stars twinkle and the yellow moon slide round the point of St. Jacques, while the steamer rose and fell languidly on the glorious Southern Seas, and all nature prepared to sleep till the splendid dawning of another day.

A feeling of holy peace and contentment crept over the pirates—truly this world was a beautiful one—the moon above resembled the cheeses below, and through the mists of whisky, the stars winked sympathetically, and even the buzz of the mosquitoes was subdued to a

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gentle hum. Then they slept, all of them, full of good-will and sympathy, and rest.

But in the silent night-watches, the Angel of Death swept over the Point of St. Jacques, and folded his wings on the deck of the little schooner.

From man to man the dread whisper passed: "The plague, the plague!"—among those, that is, who awoke to sufficient sense to whisper. How it had come, no one knew, and no one ever does know.

Doctors have elaborate theories about it, and when it appears in some new place they set it down to some merchandise or infected goods imported from places where it rages; but who knows if they are right or not? It comes, that is all we know; it has its will, it slays its hundreds or its thousands, and when the thirst of the malignant devil is quenched, it flies away.

Perhaps it had come to the *Mary Ann* in the cases of damaged goods taken in at Colombo, perhaps it came in miasma from the swamps of Sumatra; who knew and who cared? It was there, that was all the victim cared to know; there in its full malignancy and in such deadly form that some of the stricken were dead in one short quarter-of-an-hour.

One by one they were attainted; the first ones who were seized believed it poison, but the blue swellings of the plague soon left no doubt of the identity of their visitant. In some, their necks were twisted and swollen, in others the huge bumps came beneath their arms, in others on the groin, and in all the end was the same.

When the sun rose, out of thirty men, twenty were dead. The survivors, many already stricken, pushed the dead men overboard, not caring much if they were only as yet in the stupor that in the plague often precedes death.

One of the men so pushed overboard was a Chinaman; the touch of the cold water restored his senses to a sufficient degree to enable him to recognise his desperate situation.

He stiffened himself mechanically and so floated on the surface of the sea. The noonday sun shed its fierce rays on him, the tropical showers that came in the middle of the day near the Equator drenched him in their cooling downpour, and the treatment of Nature did what no medicine could have done, to repair her own handiwork. Towards evening sense began to return to him and he commenced to swim.

He had drifted far beyond the Point of St. Jacques to the entrance to a land-locked bay. On the shore a mile away, a tall row of cocoa-palms lifted their graceful heads to the yellow-flushed sky—the murmur of the waves breaking on the sandy beach was borne far out to sea.

Fun Cheng had lived most of his life in a village on the coast of Formosa, the sea was to him as much his natural element as dry land is to us.

He swam on, gaining strength with hope, and in his deadened brain disease struggled with renewed life. Soon he distinguished the Malay huts, half on land, half in the water, some built on piles with only a few twisted bamboos between the inhabitants and an impromptu bath.

Fun Cheng swam on to a deserted creek, beyond the village; here he landed, and staggering up a short slope, lay down on the glittering sand. Some of the natives had seen him swim ashore, and came round cautiously to see what manner of man was this, who had apparently risen from the empty sea.

A Chinese shopman, who had set up his business in this out-of-the-way place, and who, by the way, made a remarkably good thing out of it, came too, and entered into conversation with his countryman from a safe distance. Fun Cheng truthfully told him the facts of the case, for there is honour among thieves and Chinamen, and his questioner, foreseeing gain from the stricken trader, indicated to him a distant hut, deserted, but weather-tight, in which, he told him he might take up his abode, if he could crawl so far. Fun Cheng thankfully agreed, and begged that food and drink might be sent to him there. Ah Chung trotted away to make arrangements. Then later, when all was quiet in the village and no eavesdroppers lurking round, the hope of gain led him to risk his precious person in the near vicinity of a plague-stricken man. He got from Fun Cheng the fullest particulars of the position of the trader, of the amount of the cargo, the number of men on board. Fun Cheng, though ill, had acuteness left to make a bargain, before imparting such valuable news.

"Before the morning dawns," said he, "all will be dead on the baneful vessel. Good wood and timber, and iron and money, will remain for the fortunate man who takes the ship into his keeping."

"'Tis an undertaking of danger," said Ah Chung, "the black death still lurks on board."

"True," said Fun Cheng, "but to a Chinaman, who has paid well for the tombs of his ancestors and has not left his father to groan in purgatory, what matters it? It is only these foreign barbarians who are utterly without intelligence, who waste good merchandise, for fear of the lurking plague. Wait but a few days and I will go myself to Cochin China to search for the trader."

Ah Chung meditated: in a few days, the prize might be claimed by others.

"My friend," he said, "when to-morrow's sun breaks forth, I start myself. To you, as agreed between us, belongs one fifth of the profits that may arrive."

"'Tis little enough," said Fun Cheng sulkily, but Ah Chung cared little for that. He was master of the situation.

Next day at twelve o'clock he approached the *Mary Ann*, still anchored in the same place. Ah Chung was in a wide-sailed junk, accompanied by two stolid, immoveable Chinamen, his servants, and sharers in many a shady deed.

As they approached the schooner they hailed her, but no answer came; she lay like a painted image on the glassy sea. Ah Chung smiled, well satisfied.

"They sleep soundly in death," he said to himself. He hooked the junk on to the schooner and climbed on board. The Black Angel had used his scythe to some purpose—all were dead.

Mrs. Simpkins and her husband had evidently been released from confinement to give help to their captors, and in their turn released their children, but only to be themselves seized by the dread pestilence and to die side by side with their conquerors.

The schooner swayed slightly on the swell of the waves, and the sultry air seemed to cling closely to the stricken ship.

With stolid serenity Ah Chung and his men took possession. Why trouble about the self evident facts of death in life, of the suddeness of the judgment, of the terror of the plague? They pursued their ghastly duties of clearing the steamer and rifling the dead with unmoved hearts—and indeed with no little smug satisfaction.

In the East, sudden death is no strange visitor.

SADI GRANT.

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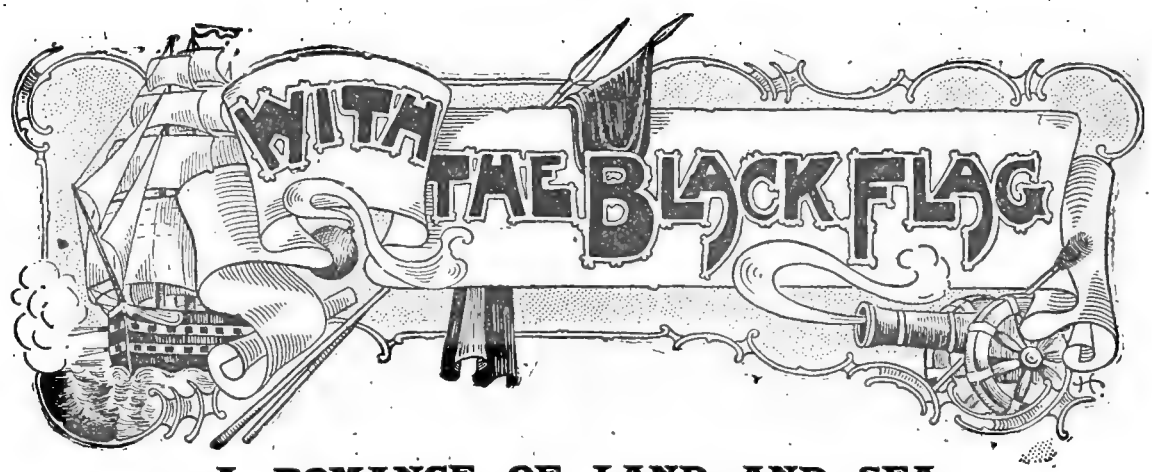

A ROMANCE OF LAND AND SEA.

By William Westall.

Author of "With the Red Eagle," "The Phantom City," "Nigel Fortescue," etc., etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

Major Wyvenhoe, commander of an expedition which went out from England to help the Venezuelans in their struggle for liberty.
Captain Cautley, who is in charge of the ship which took the expedition out.
John Ready, the servant of Wyvenhoe.
General Arismendez, ex-Governor of Pampatar and Vice-President of the Venezuelan Republic.
Don Iago Santleo, a friend of Wyvenhoe.
General Urdenetta, Governor of Pampatar, a bitter enemy of Wyvenhoe.
Bolivar, Supreme Chief of the Venezuelan Republic.
Tamanac, an Indian Cazique, and great friend of Santleo.
Master Wyvenhoe, the leading man at Manoa.

CHAPTER XXI.

Rosalind's Answer.

I awoke next morning, happy and refreshed, and able to assure my host in reply to his courteous inquiry as to how I had slept, that I had not enjoyed so long and sound a sleep since I landed in Venezuela.

Nothing had disturbed me, neither the howlings of wild beasts, the barking of dogs nor the buzzing and biting of mosquitoes.

"That is because there are none," said he. "They don't breed here, it is too breezy for them. Our dogs are kept up at nights, our cocks do not crow before dawn, and we have neither wild beasts nor venomous snakes."

"What a favoured spot! I understand now why those Englishmen settled on this mountain. After their wanderings it must have seemed to them as it seems to me, a veritable paradise."

The judge smiled complacently, and I perceived that by praising Manoa I found my way to his heart.

"And as it seems so it is; at any rate, as much as any place here below can be," he said emphatically. "Where can you find a sweeter air, a finer climate or a more delectable prospect. Sickness is almost unknown. Manoeros live many years, and when their time comes they die of old age."

"You have no doctors, then?"

"Two or three of our people are skilled in bone setting, wound dressing and a knowledge of simples, the which, and water from the cold spring, are the only physic we use."

"Any lawyers?"

"None, thank Heaven, and very little law."

"What a fortunate folk! Hardly any sickness, lives easy and long, no mosquitoes, no lawyers, therefore no dissensions, and I am sure, very few troubles of any sort perhaps none. There is no place like Manoa."

The judge's face darkened, and I feared that I had said something which had better been left unsaid.

"You are right, there is no place like Manoa, and as it pleases you so well I hope you will make it your home for a long while," he observed after a moment's hesitation, in a way which showed that, though I might inadvertently have reminded him of something he would rather have forgotten, he had not taken offence.

We had breakfast under a tree in the garden. The ladies graced the repast with their presence and everything was delightfully simple. The spoons were of bone, the cups of horn, crockery was conspicuous by its absence; but the coffee and milk were delicious, and for the first time since I left England I tasted fresh butter.

I protested with truth that I had never enjoyed a breakfast so much, and was rewarded for my praises with bright looks and enchanting smiles.

Our talk was of the old country and Europe, as to which my entertainers could not hear enough. Rosalind questioned me about my family, and when she learnt that I had neither father nor mother, sister nor brother, said I must be very lonely, and looked as though she were sorry for me.

"Maybe our kinsman has a wife," quoth Beatrice, who was as impulsive as a child and blurted out whatever came into her head.

"Not yet," I said, thinking how narrowly I had escaped having one, and mentally comparing Araminta with Rosalind I need hardly say to the latter's disadvantage.

"That is a pleasure to come," remarked the judge.

"A pleasure to come," I repeated, glancing at Rosalind, whose eyes by the merest chance, and for a fleeting moment, met mine.

"On your return to England, for which I am sure some fair maid is anxiously waiting," put in Beatrice.

"Nothing of the sort. There is no maid in England for whom I care a pin or who cares a pin for me," I returned, perhaps more warmly than the occasion warranted.

"Maybe there is one somewhere else who cares for you. The world is wide, kinsman," rejoined the girl with a merry laugh.

"Don't heed her, she is in a mischievous humour and talks nonsense," said the father. "Would it please you to

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take a ride this morning and see something of the mountain?"

"It would please me vastly, especially if the ladies would favour us with their company."

"Oh, yes, let us go," exclaimed Beatrice.

"It is impossible for us all to leave the house, but thou and Rosalind may go," said Mistress Wyvenhoe.

"If you and Diana will go next time, else were it not fair," replied Rosalind.

"Very well, let it be so. Now run away and get ready."

"And I will see to the saddling of the horses," added the judge.

We had an agreeable ride. The horses were good and, though the equipments would not have passed muster in Rotten Row, they served. The young ladies rode well, as well they might, seeing that they had begun riding bareback almost before they could walk.

Beatrice was in high spirits, full of talk and laughter, now and then challenging us to race and going off at a gallop, Rosalind quiet and occasionally pensive.

I tried to draw her out, and found that I could always do so by talking of England and Wyvenhoe Court, themes of which she never tired and to which, however we might begin, we always returned. Yet she loved Manoa dearly, and passionately admired its superb scenery.

"You have nothing like that in England," she exclaimed pointing to Mount Lofty, as a mass of crimson cloud, floating slowl westward, revealed the glorious peak, crowned with his diadem of snow.

"Nothing; we have no mountains twenty thousand feet high, and Lofty must be that at least. Who gave him that name?"

"Our English forefathers. Nobody has ever got to the top, though many have tried."

"You don't know, then, whether it is an extinct volcano?"

"An extinct volcano! Why should it be an extinct volcano?"

"Because in the Andes, I am told, there are many volcanoes, extinct and otherwise, and is not that smoke rising from the summit?"

"Surely not; only a trailing cloud, or the steam of melting snow. Whence could smoke come?"

This suggested the tremor of the night before, though as it had not occurred to me that there could be any connection between them, I don't know why it should have done, and I asked Rosalind whether she had felt anything.

"Yes, and so did we all," was her answer. "It is caused by the swelling of the river, and of late hath happened oftener than usual. Why, I know not. But pray speak not of it to my father. It would only add to his disquiet, and just now he hath cares enough."

"I am sorry for that, and shall of course do as you wish. Is he apprehensive of danger from these vibrations?"

"Nay, why should he be? He does not like them to be talked about, that is all, and were there naught else we should not have a care."

"Cares at Manoa! I thought you were all as happy as the day is long."

"So we ought to be and so, not long ago, we were. But now——" and then with an air of embarrassment she stopped short.

"Do not tell me anything you think you had better not," I said gently, "only as you are good enough to call me kinsman, regard me as a friend whom you may implicitly trust, and who will be only too glad to serve you and also your father, in whatever way he can and you may desire."

"Thank you, kinsman, I will," she answered frankly, and as we were just then joined by the judge, who had stopped to give some directions to an Indian labourer, our colloquy ceased. Beatrice was a long way ahead.

Had Rosalind been an ordinary girl her candour and unreserve after so short an acquaintance would have shown

A young man accosted us, and was introduced to me as Master Antony Goring.

both a want of modesty and sense. But she was not an ordinary girl.

Of a frank and open nature, free from self-consciousness and ignorant of the conventions of polite society, she had no more knowledge of the world or taint of worldliness than an infant.

Moreover, the poor child (foolishly enough), looked on her English "kinsman" as in some sense a superior being, and I on my part, attracted by the comeliness of her looks and the sweetness of her disposition, had spared no effort to make myself agreeable to her.

Rosalind's pathetic reference to her father's troubles touched me deeply, perhaps all the more so because of its vagueness, and her reluctance to define them. Had I suspected that I might be, in some sort, the cause, my concern would have been still greater.

I thought we were going to ride all round Manoa, but the judge said that would be a day's journey, so we went no further than the track, the only way, in addition to the ladder, by which it was possible to go up or down the mountain, and the only point where the sides were not absolutely sheer.

A wide rift it was, deep and steep, which a sailor, a chimney-sweep, or a cragsman might scale, yet in its natural condition quite impracticable for amateurs, or any quadrupeds less sure-footed than goats. But by cutting paths in some places and throwing bridges across the chasm

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at right-angles to its course in others, a serviceable, albeit difficult, road had been contrived.

"That is the way the ladies go, I suppose?" said I.

"Ladies and four-legged things," replied the judge laughing. "We call it the ladies' ride."

"How did they manage when the path was blocked?"

"That was before my time. I suppose they had to abide where they were. The way by the ladders is much quicker."

"How about going down? Ascending is bad enough, but descending must be both dangerous and slow."

"Not when you are used to it. We don strong leather gauntlets and leggings and slide down. It is only a matter of a few minutes, whereas by the ladies' ride you cannot descend under an hour. You see how secure we are. We have only to pull up the ladder and block the path to make Manoa as inaccessible as the top of Mount Lofty."

"So you could stand a long siege?"

"A siege of Manoa would be a vain thing. So long as the mountain stands, and our people are true to themselves no missile can reach us, no foe hurt us, and as you have seen it produces everything we need, with a little labour. Nevertheless, we would rather keep foes at a distance, for if the mountain were turned into a prison we should no longer be free men."

As the judge said, I had noted the marvellous fertility of the mountain. It was an undulating table land, the greater part under cultivation, producing luxuriant crops, and abounding in rich pastures. The houses, too, were good of their kind, and the folk who lived in them looked prosperous and contented.

But they were of a different type from the Wyvenhoes, the Crosses, the Santleys, and others whom I had seen in the village and elsewhere; darker skinned and distinctly more Indian in feature and general appearance.

Santley inquired whether the judge had said anything about his troubles.

As I suspected at the time and afterwards learnt Manoeros were of two classes, I might almost say of two races. Certain of the descendants of the English settlers being more prosperous and fastidious than the others had chosen their wives with greater care, preferring those who were the most English-looking and occasionally intermarrying with Spanish Creoles.

This practice became a tradition and the families who observed it developed into an aristocracy of birth, wealth and ability. Nevertheless the results were not always uniform.

Now and then an aristocratic baby came into the world with a red skin and Indian features, and plebeian children were occasionally born who might have passed for the offspring of European parents.

On our way homeward the judge informed me that he meant to invite some friends to supper, with a view to my making their acquaintance, thereby reminding me that before we separated on the previous day my compadre had asked me to call at his father's house, a duty which after dinner and siesta I hastened to fulfil.

The house was in the same style as the judge's, though not so large, and the master of it a fine old gentleman with a wife as hale as himself. He had a grand manner and gave me a cordial welcome, saying how pleased he was that his son James and myself had become such good friends, and thanked me for the kindness I had shown him and the help I had given him.

To this I answered that the obligation was very much on the other side, and that without his son's help I should not have been alive, which seemed greatly to please him. As was to be expected, he asked many questions about England, and was very proud of his English lineage.

"I was born in 1740, when my father was forty years old," he said, "and his grandfather was the son of Paul Santley, one of the adventurers."

"Who came from Ware, in Hertfordshire," I added.

"How do you know that?" he asked.

"His name and birth-place are set down in the narrative of my ancestor, Gilbert Wyvenhoe, of which you may have heard. They were neighbours and friends."

"James told me about the narrative yesterday, and it is pleasant to think that we, too, are friends, for my son's friends are mine, and that our ancestors were also friends strengthens the tie," said Master Santley heartily, and we again shook hands.

When the visit was over, Don Iago, as I still liked to call him, bore me company. He seemed thoughtful, looking not nearly so bright as he ought to have done, seeing that he had only just arrived home after a long absence, and found his kinsfolk in good health.

"You seem dull to-day, is there aught amiss?" I asked him.

"Nothing amiss with my people. My father, though he was ailing when he sent Tamanac in search of me, is now quite well, also my mother, so are my sisters, and happily married, too."

"All the same, there is something on your mind, my friend, or you are not feeling well."

"Oh, I am well enough."

"You mean there is something on your mind?"

"I do. Things are not as they were when I went away. Has the judge said anything?"

"He has said a good deal; nothing, however, that suggests a cause for your pensiveness."

"He appears quite contented then. You did not gather that he had any particular cause for worry just now?"

"Not exactly, though when I come to think of it, he made two or three remarks that might be construed in that sense. On the other hand, he protests that Manoa is an earthly paradise and if all who live here are not happy the fault lies with themselves."

"He is right there, and I think nearly all are happy. But you must know that the judge is so devoted to Manoa

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that he will let nobody find fault with it but himself, and when matters are not quite to his liking, takes it very much to heart. However, as he has not been more explicit I think I had better follow his example—for the present."

"Manoeros seem to revel in the mysterious. For a long time you were a mystery, now there are other mysteries," I said, smiling.

"You know why I had to be mysterious. I could not help it. But I have no liking for mysteries and secrets between friends; they are incompatible with true friendship, and if you really wish it I will tell you what is troubling us. Only I would liefer the judge told you. If, however, he does not, I shall."

"Do as you think best, my dear Santley. This is no business of mine and I want to know nothing that you don't want to tell me."

On which he changed the subject and we presently met a young man who accosted us and was introduced to me as Master Antony Goring. He looked like a full-blooded Indian and his countenance and manner did not impress me favourably.

"He comes of a good family, but his father lost caste by marrying an Indian woman, who was not a Huaco, and he resembles her both in looks and disposition," remarked Santley as we resumed our walk. "We neither like him nor his family, with whom we are barely on speaking terms. It had given mortal offence, and for other reasons been impolitic not to introduce you, but don't tell your kinsman, he cannot abide him."

At the judge's garden gate we parted, Santley preferring not to enter, but we met again in the evening, he and his father being among the friends whom the judge had bidden to supper. It was a large gathering and I was greatly in request, being asked so many questions about England that in the end I had to give a sort of lecture, which, instead of contenting my audience led to further questioning, and it was past midnight when the party broke up.

I esteem it a great privilege to be an Englishman and am proud of my country, but before I had been at Manoa many days I was heartily tired of it as a subject of conversation. But I did not tire of my host and his family; he was always genial and they were always kind, and all made so much of me that knowing I should not be able to return their hospitality I began to feel positively uncomfortable and almost wished they would be less kind.

We made excursions nearly every day, riding sometimes round the mountain, now and then descending to the plain, where we had good sport, hunting leopards and wild pigs. But unless Rosalind were one of the party (and she did not go a-hunting) I never felt happy.

From the first I had taken a strong fancy to her, and fancy ripened rapidly into love, such love as I had never felt before. I laughed when I compared my penchant for Araminta with my passion for Rosalind.

Whether Rosalind returned my love I could not tell, and short of asking her had no means of ascertaining. That she liked me was obvious; she made no secret of it but I feared it was more the liking of a sister for an elder brother—a very much elder brother—for she thought me rather old—than the feeling which I would fain have had her entertain for me.

Also (and this increased my doubts) her manner to me at times was marked by a certain reticence and timidity, which was all the more perplexing as at the beginning of our intercourse it had been the reverse.

Had her self-consciousness been awakened, and if so what did it portend? Was it a good sign or a bad?

And there were other considerations that made for perplexity. Rosalind could become my wife and accompany me to England only by separating herself from her kindred for ever. The distance was so vast, the journey so hard, for a woman well-nigh impossible, that returning to Manoa would be almost, if not altogether, out of the question.

Between it and the Atlantic stretched two thousand miles of forests, llanos, mountains and swamps; between it and the Pacific towered the Cordillera of the Andes, with their raging torrents, their devastating storms and the terrible paramoes, and on the other side we might encounter

"Is anything troubling you?"

dangers still more formidable—rebels, royalists and robbers—and never reach the coast, much less England.

Had I the right to ask Rosalind to confront so many perils and make so great a sacrifice, and would her parents consent to lose her almost as utterly as if she were to die?

There was an alternative. I might settle in Manoa; but that would mean an end to the Wyvenhoes of Wyvenhoe Court, and I had interests at home which I could not abandon without a dereliction of duty.

Moreover, as there was no way of getting supplies from England, I should have to become a pensioner on my father-in-l w's bounty, to which, even though he were willing, I could never consent.

The more I pondered these things the more I was perplexed, and after long thought I concluded that there was nothing for it but to cease worrying (if I could) and put my trust in Providence and the good fortune which hitherto had served me so well.

Some time, a month or more after our previous conversation on the subject, Santley inquired whether the judge had said anything about his troubles and their cause.

"Not a word; I am as much in the dark as ever," was my answer.

"Then I will," he said, and told me rather a long story of which this is the purport:

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Manoa was ruled by a council of seven, which, albeit once on a time chosen by popular vote, had become virtually self elective, vacancies as they occurred being filled up by the members themselves. Like other similar bodies, the Manoan council was dominated by its strongest man, in this instance Judge Wyvenhoe, who had so firmly established his authority that for many years he had ruled and ruled well, with almost despotic sway. But latterly, for reasons which it is unnecessary here to set forth, an opposition had arisen, led by Philip Goring (father of Antony) which threatened the judge's ascendancy and boded ill for the peace of the community, both of them having partizans outside whose rivalry was as bitter as their leaders', and my kinsman was too masterful either to yield or temporize; he would be autocrat or nothing.

Meanwhile, whatever he proposed was opposed. A majority of the council had been against my coming, alleging that to allow strangers to visit Manoa was unwise and contrary to all precedent. But the judge would not listen to them, and himself went to fetch me, thereby giving great offence, and still further embittering his enemies.

This vexed me exceedingly, and so I told Santley, adding that rather than cause strife I would leave the mountain.

"No, no, my dear friend, you must do nothing of the sort," said he. "You are not answerable for the strife. The council opposed your coming merely to thwart the judge, and your going away would grieve him as much as it would gratify your enemy. So dismiss the idea from your mind and, above all, make no mention of it to your kinsman."

To this I consented, though with reluctance, being far from sure that by prolonging my stay I should not add to Master Wyvenhoe's cares, and had there been no Rosalind I should have sought a pretext for taking my leave.

But no long while after my talk with Santley something happened which put an end to my indecision and brought matters to a crisis.

As I have already hinted, siesta was an institution in Manoa. After the midday dinner everybody disappeared, presumably to indulge in a nap. I generally betook myself to the garden and laid me down in a hammock, under the shade of a magnolia tree, sometimes to sleep, oftener to smoke.

One fine day, when I was thus occupied, I heard a light footfall, and, turning my head, espied Rosalind slowly pacing along a side walk, bordered with great rose trees.

I slipped from my hammock and joined her.

"You look pensive," I said. "Is anything troubling you?"

"Nothing worth mentioning. I was only thinking."

"About what?"

"Are your gardens at Wyvenhoe Court anything like this?"

"That is only an evasion," I returned, laughing. "You were not thinking about Wyvenhoe Court."

"Never mind, tell me about the gardens."

Which I did at some length, for they were old and quaint and delightful, and merited a better description than I could give of them.

"I should like to see them, they must be very beautiful," said Rosalind wistfully.

An irresistible impulse seized me; doubts, dangers and difficulties went to the winds.

"Go with me to England and they shall be yours," I exclaimed.

Rosalind regarded me with a bewildered stare.

"Go with you to England! What?" she stammered.

"As my wife. I love you, Rosalind, I love you."

"You love me! Me, a foolish girl, who has never been away from Manoa. It is not possible, it would be too much——"

"It is more than possible, my Rosalind. You are all the world to me. But can you love me?——"

"Yea, kinsman. I love you with all my heart. I began to love you that day you came to our house and were so kind."

"My darling, you don't know how glad you have made me," I said putting my arms round her. "But do you know what going to England means? The way is long, the dangers are great, and it is so far away that you might never see Manoa again. Think well before you decide."

"I have decided. I love Manoa much, but I love you more. As Ruth said to Naomi, so say I to you: 'Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.'"

"And may God bless you, darling," I murmured, drawing her closer to me and gazing enraptured into her sweet eyes, bright with happiness and love.

"Oh, kinsman, what was that?" she exclaimed, starting back in affright.

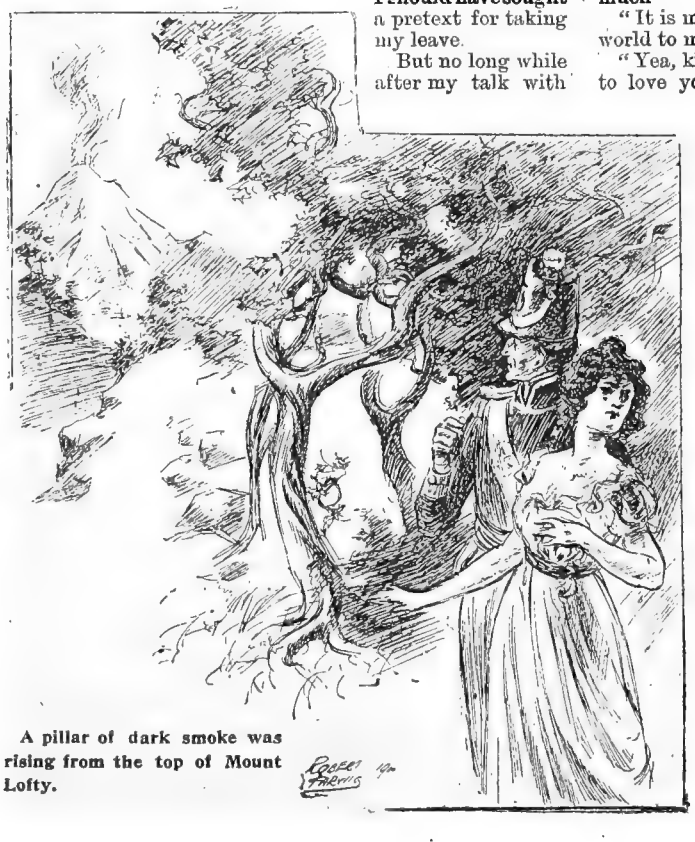
The ground was trembling under our feet.

"Nothing to be alarmed about, only the river," I said with feigned indifference.

"The river again, oh that river!" murmured Rosalind, clinging to me nervously. "Despite what my father says I sometimes think——"

Another trembling, longer and more marked than before arrested the words on her lips. I looked towards the Cordillera. A pillar of dark smoke was rising from the top of Mount Lofty into the cloudless sky and my heart grew heavy with a nameless dread.

(To be concluded.)



A pillar of dark smoke was rising from the top of Mount Lofty.

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT GHOSTS.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humorous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "Jock's Ward," by Mrs. Herbert Martin, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source *must* be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr Thomas Riley, 178 Horton Grange Road, Bradford. Attempts this week must deal with Stories about CAMELS, and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, November 19th. Post-cards only, please.

Quite Enough.

LANDLORD: "Good-morning, sir; hope you enjoyed a good night's rest, sir?"

Traveller: "Yes, thanks; pretty fair."

"Saw nothing of the ghost that is said to appear from time to time in the room you occupied?"

"Ah! yes, I did, though"

"And how did you get rid of the intruder?"

"I offered him a glass of your wine, when he vanished with a gesture of supreme disgust."

"Oh, ah! Well, I never!"

T. A. R.

Have You—

DIBBINS was staying at a strange hotel in Leeds, and retired to rest about eleven.

He had been in bed about half-an-hour, when he was startled by the opening of his bedroom door. Looking up he was horrified to see a figure clothed in white approaching his bedside.

He tried to speak, but could not; his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth, and he broke into a cold sweat from head to foot.

A moment more and the figure was at his side, and a voice said:

"Excuse me, sir, but have you got that Ten-Pound Note?"

J. W.

A Somnambulist's Danger.

A FRIEND told us the other day about a little experience he had with a young boy who was addicted to sleep-walking. Of this fact he was not aware, and he was much surprised, on being awakened at night, to see the youth standing at the window in the moonlight. Said the boy:

"I wonder if the water is very deep."

Evidently he thought that he was in a boat on the lake.

Our friend awoke at once to a recognition of the situation and to an awful sense of the emergency.

"It's very deep," he said. "I wouldn't try to swim if I were you."

"Why not?" asked the somnambulist. "It's just as calm as can be."

"But there are sharks in the water."

"I don't believe it," said the boy—the two had been out fishing all day long. "I mean to take a bath."

With that he would have dived out of the window had not his companion managed by this time to creep up and seize him by his night-clothes. C. H. M.

The "Haunted" Man.

THEY were talking of "spooks" at a hotel the other evening, and several stories had been told which made the flesh of the listeners creep.

During a lull in the conversation the quiet man, who sat near the door, spoke up:

"Gentlemen," he said, in sepulchral tones, "the weird narratives I have just listened to have awakened memories which I thought had passed beyond recall. I beg of you not to be sceptical, nor yet think me boasting, when I tell you that for many years I was the most haunted man in creation.

"Scarcely a night passed that I did not see apparitions of all kinds floating before my vision. Elves, demons, witches, and other evil shades were familiar companions of mine, whilst others of my constant ghostly visitors were the victims of foul crimes, whose shadowy fingers would point to the crimson tide oozing from their breasts, and whose eyes seemed to implore me to avenge them ere they vanished again into thin air!

"I was perpetually haunted; in fact, my existence seemed linked to the supernatural. Spiritland was an open book to me. I——"

"But where was this?" inquired his listeners excitedly in a breath.

"It was during the time," he replied, putting on his hat and seizing the door handle, "that I was the proprietor of Professor Bunkum's Unrivalled Ghost Illusion!"

A. V.

All's Fair in Love.

A FARMER, who had lately become a widower, was aroused at midnight by the loud barking of his dog. On going to it, the animal displayed extreme terror, whereupon the farmer took his gun and proceeded to an inspection.

All at once he saw a phantom, clothed in a white sheet, rise behind the hedge.

"Wretch!" exclaimed the phantom, "I am your deceased wife, come from the grave to warn you not to marry Maria Ames, to whom you are making love. The only woman to succeed me is Henrietta Burns. Marry her, or persecution and torment shall be your doom."

This strange address from the apparition, instead of dismaying the farmer, restored his courage. He accordingly rushed to the ghostly visitor, and stripping off the sheet, discovered the fair Henrietta Burns herself, looking extremely foolish.

It is said that the farmer, admiring the girl's trick, has had the banns published for their marriage.

F. W.

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SOME OTHER LITTLE STORIES.

His Little Joke.

When the phonograph was a newer invention than it is at the present time, Edison put one of the machines in a clock and placed it in a guest-chamber. Being a great lover of a practical joke, he also placed a friend in the guest-chamber one night.

Just as his friend was disrobing, he heard a voice exclaim:

"Eleven o'clock; one hour more!"

It is needless to say that slumber did not descend upon the eyelids of the visitor during that hour. At midnight the voice exclaimed:

"Twelve o'clock; prepare to die!"

This was too much for the visitor, and he sprang from the bed and rushed to the library, where Edison and his friends were waiting patiently expecting his appearance.

The invention was soon explained, and quiet restored.

U. S.

Oh! Mr. Porter.

The other day a train drew up at Chester Station. One of two young ladies alighted, but remained chatting to her friend at the carriage window. As the signal stood at danger, the train did not start for several minutes.

"What are we waiting for?" asked one of the young ladies as a porter came up to them.

"We are waiting till you have finished your conversation, miss," replied the porter.

"Oh, thank you very much, porter; but we will not detain you any longer. Good-bye, Emily, darling."

Just then the signal dropped, and the train started, leaving the young lady on the platform looking in her purse for some small change for the purpose of tipping the obliging porter.

A. H.

Explaining the Business.

A well-dressed lad, the son of wealthy parents, thought it would be quite manly to earn a few coppers for himself by selling newspapers.

He stopped a tattered newsboy in the street and said to him:

"Do you think I should be able to earn money as you do, if I bought some papers and came to this corner to sell them?"

"Why do you want to sell papers?"

"I'm tired of being idle."

"Well," said the philosophic little newsboy, with a serious air, "d'yer think you can hold twenty papers in one hand, lick three or four boys bigger'n yerself with the other hand, while yer keeps two more off with yer feet, and yell 'Football 'dition!' all the time?"

"No-o, I don't," replied the well-dressed boy.

"Then yer no good in the newsboy biz," replied the tattered philosopher. "You'd better get yer people to prentice yer to something light."

A. S.

Why it was Tough.

The other day a gentleman entered a certain restaurant in Regent Street and ordered chicken.

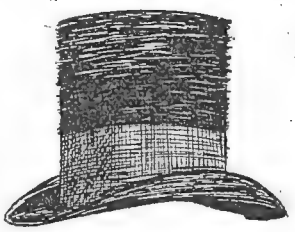
The chicken was evidently tough, for when the waiter came in he beheld the gentleman in a great state of wrath.

"Waiter," he said, "this chicken is very tough."

"Very sorry, sir. That chicken was always a peculiar bird. Why, when we came to kill it we couldn't catch it, so at last we had to shoot it. It flew on the house-tops, and——"

"Ah, by jove, that accounts for it. You must have shot the weather-cock by mistake."

E. C. S.



HERE IS A PICTURE OF KRUGER'S TOP HAT.

Do You Think it will Fit YOU?

Don't you think it would look nice on your drawing-room table, or under a glass case on your mantel-piece? Well, there is no reason whatever why you should not get it. As you probably know, the Editor of *Pearson's Weekly* has bought it, and is offering it as a prize in a simple competition. All you have to do is to send in what you consider the funniest joke you ever heard. It may be either cut from a paper or written up by yourself. In either case you must affix to it a coupon which will be found in the current number of *Pearson's Weekly*.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS

OF Mr. Austin Fryers'

WEIRD NEW STORY

"THE UNCREATED MAN,"

WILL APPEAR IN

"THE DAILY EXPRESS"

ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17th.

The powerful work of Mr. Austin Fryers is already well known to the readers of "PEARSON'S WEEKLY;" but his latest Romance of a scientist who sets himself to war with nature exceeds all his previous stories in the thrilling nature of its incidents. The grim plot is relieved by a charming love-story. . .

REMEMBER. . . .

The Date—November 17th. The Author—Austin Fryers.

The Title—"The Uncreated Man." The Paper—"Daily Express."

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THE STAMP PORTRAIT.

THE senior partner at Messrs. Castle and Hayward's, the well-known East India merchants, came out of his private room. accompanied by his cashier.

Both gentlemen looked unusually serious and as the clerks in the busy counting-house looked up and caught the expression on the face of their chief they fell to wondering as to what storm was brewing, or to put it into the terms usually employed "Who's in for a wigging now?"

Just a glance and each individual immediately became a model of industry, until every pen was arrested by the voice of Mr. Anson the cashier, who was standing, with his chief, in the centre of the office.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I regret to inform you that something of a very unpleasant nature has occurred in the office. Last evening I brought from the bank a bag containing notes and gold, which I placed in my desk in the presence of Mr. Castle. This morning I find some of the gold is missing and also two five-pound notes. I very much regret the circumstances which compel me to request each man to lock his desk, place the key on the top, and remain seated in his place until a search has been made. Before commencing the search I have to inform you that at present suspicion is not attached to any one of you individually, but for general satisfaction it has been decided to make this search."

Astonishment was writ large upon the face of the busy bees of Messrs. Castle and Hayward's hive as they complied with the cashier's request. When every desk had been locked and the key placed on the top, Mr. Anson commenced his round, while Mr. Castle surveyed the proceedings from his position in the centre. scanning the faces of his clerks as though he would read their inmost thoughts. There was a variety of expressions. Some looked indignant, as if they resented the imputation cast upon them generally, others seemed inclined to be amused by the affair; one or two wore a look of bored indifference, real or assumed, a few looked grave and serious—a sort of reflection of their chief's expression.

Meanwhile the cashier was going the round of the desks, but when he had completed his task it was found that that cover had been drawn blank, to use a hunting phrase. He rejoined his chief and a whispered consultation ensued. As a result of this the cashier had another announcement to make.

"The search of the desks has not led to any discovery. and it is with extreme regret that I have to ask each of you to submit to a personal search. This is a most unpleasant and painful business, but I think you will all agree. If any man has an objection if he will step out here we shall be glad to hear his reasons, though I must say that I hope none of you will take that course."

There was a momentary buzz of conversation and then as nobody expressed an objection, though many of them looked upon it as an indignity, the search began.

The course of procedure arranged was as follows; each man, when his name was called, left his seat at the desk and walked over to the place where his outdoor garments hung, and after exhibiting the contents of the pockets in the clothes he was wearing, he turned out those in the coats which hung on the pegs. Many of them changed their coats on arriving at the office and as most of them had overcoats with them, the business was a lengthy one. It also caused some embarrassment, and had it not been for the gravity of the affair, the display would have been very amusing.

Pipes, pouches, cigarettes, photos—which were evidently produced with some reluctance—and papers, such were the contents of the various pockets. Still nothing had been discovered, and out of the forty odd clerks, only six remained to be searched.

The next to be called on to submit to the ordeal was James Armstrong. He stepped out with a look of quiet confidence. Pocket after pocket he turned out until he came to his overcoat. One by one the pockets were overhauled until only the inside breast pocket remained.

Inserting his hand he drew forth the contents and then started back with a look of consternation. A certain crisp crackle had denoted the presence of the paper currency, and as he started a small parcel fell from his grasp and struck the floor with a metallic chink.

The search was ended—the culprit was found. The cashier looked surprised and even regretful, while the appearance of James Armstrong might very well be taken to betoken guilt.

The cashier walked over to where his chief still stood and a second consultation followed, after which he again addressed the wondering clerks.

"Gentlemen, you may now resume your labours, but before you do so I am instructed by Mr. Castle to inform you that it is his wish that no mention of this painful business be made outside." With this Mr. Castle and the cashier withdrew to the private room, accompanied by James Armstrong.

When the door was closed, there was more talk than work in the office. The discovery of the missing money in James Armstrong's pocket had come as a general surprise, for, though none would have dared to venture on a guess as to who was the most *likely* to be the culprit, most of them, if asked to name the most *unlikely*, would have named, after themselves of course, James Armstrong.

There were, indeed, one or two of the wilder spirits in the office to whom John Armstrong had given offence by refusing to join them in their recreations, and whom he had ventured to remonstrate with and reprove, who affected not to be surprised and indulged in cheap sneers.

"Another hypocrite unmasked," said one; "I am always suspicious of these professing saints."

This remark, however, was received with evident disapproval, for though there were others who had disagreed with Armstrong, they were too English to gloat over a fallen foe.

Meanwhile a painful scene was being enacted in the inner room.

"Mr. Armstrong," said the chief, "I shall be pleased to hear anything you may have to say, though there is not much that can be said in the face of this discovery."

"Mr. Castle, I can only say, though I cannot

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blame you if you do not believe me, that I am utterly unable to account for the presence of the money in my pocket."

He would have said more but his emotions overcame him and he broke down.

"James," resumed his employer in a more kindly tone than he had hitherto used, "this discovery came both as a shock and a surprise to me. You have been with us a long time and have served us faithfully and well. I have watched you with considerable interest and had hoped to see you rise. If you were in financial difficulties, had you confided in me and I had found the reason of your difficulties not to be a faulty one I would have advanced you money. You must have been mad, however, to take this, for you must have known that the loss would be immediately discovered. Now, tell me, what led you to commit this folly?"

"I assure you, sir, that I am innocent and know nothing further about it than you already know," replied the clerk.

"Were you the first to arrive this morning?" asked the cashier.

"Thomas Hardcastle, Reginald Shaw and I arrived simultaneously, meeting at the door."

The other two clerks were summoned to the chief's room, and the excitement in the outer office became intense.

"I suppose he is trying to incriminate someone else, now," remarked the man who had indulged in the previous sneer.

Upon inquiry it was found that the three clerks had arrived together as Armstrong had stated. It was also ascertained that, before the arrival of the others, each of the three had, in turn, been left by himself in the counting-house for a short time, while the other two had been in other parts of the building.

Mr. Castle was sufficiently just to Armstrong to inform the other two before dismissing them to their duties, that no attempt had been made by their colleague to implicate them. When they had gone he again turned to Armstrong.

"James, I ask you to make a clean breast of the business and promise you that I shall not deal harshly with you. If you will only confess what made you thus rashly throw away your good character I will retain you in my employ, though you will have to be transferred to the wharf, as it would be unpleasant for all concerned for you to remain here. I make you this offer, because I am loth to think that one who has been so consistent and faithful as you have been during the years of your service here, can be utterly bad. I am inclined to attribute your action to a m d impulse."

Looking his employer steadily in the face James Armstrong replied, "I have nothing to confess, sir."

"Very well," answered Mr. Castle coldly. "In consideration of your previous good character and the fact that the money has been recovered, I shall not take any action against you, beyond, of course, dismissing you from our service."

Turning to the cashier he said, "Mr. Anson, you will pay Mr. Armstrong's salary up to the end of the month and arrange for the appointment of a man to fill the vacancy." With this the senior partner took his hat and coat and left the office, shortly followed by James Armstrong.

On leaving the office James Armstrong went direct to the clergyman whose church he attended and among whose workers he was enrolled. There he poured out the whole story and repeated his protestations of innocence.

The vicar listened sympathetically to the narrative. He had seen much of James Armstrong's inner life, and from his knowledge of him quite believed in his innocence. In assuring the grief-stricken clerk of his belief, however, he also pointed out the difficulty of proving it, and then he made a suggestion.

"I have a brother," said he, "who is engaged in business in Liverpool. He is a kind-hearted man and delights in doing good. With your permission I shall write to him, telling him of your unfortunate position and also of my own belief, and I think it very likely that he may be able to offer you a position in his office. While we are awaiting his reply, which I shall ask him to let me have promptly, you had better come and stay with me."

Armstrong was grateful for this offer. In his trouble, it would have been dreary indeed for him to stay in his lodgings, to say nothing of the agony which he would endure at the thought that the other lodgers would despise him, even if they did not refuse altogether to associate with him. He could not go back to his mother in Devonshire, and the proximity and companionship of the vicar would be a solace to him.

There did not seem to be much doubt in the mind of the Rev. Arthur Best that a place would be found for Armstrong in the Liverpool firm, so the young fellow felt more at ease with reference to earning a living; but the weight of the unjust accusation so overwhelmed him that he went about like one in a dream.

It was just after dinner on the following day, while the vicar and Armstrong were in earnest conversation, that a letter was brought in for the young man. It had been sent on from his lodging, he having informed his landlady that he was staying with Mr. Best.

The envelope bore the imprint of Castle and Hayward; the young fellow saw this at once and tore it open in great haste, his heart beating much more rapidly than usual and his brain in a whirl with the wild hope that the contents of the letter would inform him that a terrible mistake had been made. But a shadow passed over his face when he had opened the sheet of paper; he looked at the handwriting on the envelope, and then dropped both paper and envelope to the ground, and placed his hand before his face to hide the tears of vexation and grief which he could not repress.

"May I look at it?" asked the vicar kindly.

Receiving an affirmative reply in the form of a nod, he picked up the paper. It was a sheet of Castle and Hayward's letter paper, quite blank, with a miniature photographic portrait of Armstrong—about the size of a postage-stamp—pinned to it.

The Vicar then picked up the envelope and looked at the handwriting.

"Do you understand the meaning of this, Armstrong?" he asked. "Do you recognise the handwriting?"

"Yes, sir," replied the young fellow as soon as he could master his emotion. "Only two days ago I gave away the last three photographs I had to fellows in the office. One was to Shaw, with whom I always was on good terms. He has returned it to me in that way, it is his handwriting, and I must take it that he thinks me guilty and will not even keep my portrait."

The vicar scrutinised the postage stamp and made a mental note; he then unpinned the photograph from the paper and mechanically turned it over. He examined the back of the portrait for a few seconds very atten-

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tively and, putting envelope, paper and portrait into his pocket without a word to Armstrong concerning the result of his examination, he went up to the young fellow and whispered a few words of comfort to him.

"If I had not been a cleryman," mused the Rev. Arthur Best about half-an-hour later, on his way to the City, "I think I should have liked to be a detective. After all, there is just a resemblance between the two occupations; it is true that the detective is chiefly employed in the detection of criminals, but he also tries to prevent the commission of crimes, and the clergyman does that also, only in another way."

The reverend gentleman went straight to the offices of Castle and Hayward, and asked to see the chief partner. His request was granted immediately, and he was shown into Mr. Castle's private room. He remained there for about twenty minutes, which was an unusually long time for an interview with such a busy man; and when he left Mr. Best's countenance looked a little more cheerful.

It was about half-an-hour before closing time when Mr. Castle entered the large room and called out in a preoccupied sort of manner:

"Oh—er—yes, you'll do, Mr. Shaw. Come into my room, please, and bring your pen. I want you to copy something private for me."

Mr. Shaw, surprised and pleased at being selected, sprang from his seat and obeyed the summons. It was a short and curious document which he had to copy; a disjointed sort of affair, as it seemed to him, and contained something about paying a certain Jackson a sum of money without fail. There were three or four sets of figures among the writing.

Mr. Castle seemed to have a good deal of private business on hand just then, for he stayed after hours that night, and the next morning Mr. Hardcastle and Mr. Boulton, quite unknown to each other, were called to the chief's room to copy documents which were in some respects similar to that copied by Shaw. In each case the copyist was requested to keep the contents of the document a profound secret.

In the afternoon the Rev. Arthur Best called again, and, after another lengthy interview, departed in a very cheerful frame of mind. Then Mr. Castle asked Mr. Anson to step in, after which Mr. Boulton was called.

"Mr. Boulton," said the chief suavely, "here is a little memorandum of yours which you have no doubt missed and will be glad to have back."

As he spoke he placed the little photograph of Armstrong on the table, face downwards, in front of the clerk.

"It was discovered, you will be interested to learn, in the folds of the two £5 notes that were put into Armstrong's pocket," continued the chief.

Boulton's face went deadly pale; he glanced swiftly at the chief and the cashier, and then made a bolt for the door.

But as he put his hand on the nob, he was seized by the cashier and the chief touched the electric bell for the porter.

The Rev. Arthur Best made a second call at the offices that afternoon, this second call having been arranged by Mr. Castle.

"Yes, I'm happy to say that we have discovered the culprit, and he has confessed," said Mr. Castle. "Tell Armstrong to come back here to-morrow morning, and we will do what we can to make amends."

Mr. Castle then related what had occurred between the two visits, but it will be better for us to repeat the explanation given by Mr. Best to Armstrong.

Boulton had been betting and was hard pressed for money; he had yielded to the temptation of an unexpected opportunity and had taken the money. Then he became scared at what he had done, and in his anxiety to get rid of the money he had dropped it into the pocket of one of the overcoats hanging near his own, regardless of the consequences to the owner of the coat. He had just done that when Mr. Castle and the cashier entered the room, as above related.

When the notes were unfolded by Mr. Anson, the little portrait dropped out. The cashier had taken it for granted that this was a confirmation of Armstrong's guilt. In thrusting the notes into the pocket, the portrait had got in the folds, as smaller papers sometimes do. He had pinned this portrait to a blank sheet of paper without noticing anything on the back of the photo, and, after having sealed it in an envelope, had given that envelope to Shaw to address. He had concluded that Armstrong would recognise a piece of evidence against himself without explanation.

The vicar had first noted that the postage stamp was a perforated one, and had decided from this circumstance that the letter had been sent by the firm and not by Shaw personally. Then he had observed on the back of the photo a brief pencil note about, "Jackson" and "pay without fail."

He had shown these things to Mr. Castle, telling him that it must be one of the three which Armstrong had given away. Mr. Castle determined to test the handwritings and figures of the three clerks and compare them with the words and figures on the back of the photo. He had stayed late in order to examine the books and compare the figures in those also.

When Mr. Best called on the second day, Mr. Castle was able to tell him that he believed the culprit had been detected. He was asked to call again an hour later, when, it was hoped, the whole mystery would be cleared up.

Armstrong went back to Castle and Hayward's the next morning, and received quite an ovation. He received an increase of salary, and his prospects are considered very good indeed.

J. H. PEAT AND GEO. DAY.

DAUGHTER: "Oh, papa, I've just got the most lovely yachting costume you ever saw."

Papa (busily): "I'm glad you like it."

Daughter: "It's too sweet for anything. Now all we need is a yacht.

"AH, but you have a loving husband, Mrs. Simms. I remember before your marriage he said he would move heaven and earth for you."

"I remember; but now that we are married he won't even condescend to move the dresser so that I may sweep beneath it."

"TWENTY TEAZER."

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

EVERYBODY seems to be trying to find out. We will tell you all about it in good time. Meanwhile a cheque for a guinea will be sent to the person from whom we receive the best four-line verse, the last two words of which shall be "Twenty Teazer." The verses may be humorous or serious, just as competitors like. All attempts should reach the "Teazer Editor" by Monday, November 19

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The Salamander Powder Swindle.

A COMET SCARE.

GOOLEY took up the morning paper, drew a chair to the table and prepared for breakfast. The cruet served for a paper rest, as he deftly scalped an egg and scanned the news as an aid to digestion.

He had no fixed pursuit, belonging to that class who live on their wits if they possess any, if not they steal from someone else. Gooley was a human shark who preyed on his fellow man. For the last few months his banking account had looked ill—no new thing. He had prescribed for it before and meant to do so again, but it would want a strong tonic this time.

Suddenly he became interested in the paper. It was a line in large type. He read again, "The Destruction of the World by Fire." Then followed a prediction by that eminent man, Professor Biglie, stating how a comet would come into contact with the earth on November 7th, 1900, and how the earth would be destroyed with every living thing.

It was not the fear of a roasting—he expected a hot quarter—that worked on Gooley, but a sudden idea, a grand scheme. In fact, a fortune was staring him in the face. So brilliant and comical was the idea that he gave a wild whoop, jumped on to his feet, clapped his hands and laughed. It was not a laugh pleasant to the ear, but such a one as an enemy would favour you with after scoring a point.

Folding the paper he placed it in his pocket and left the house. A few minutes' walk brought him to a building where numerous brass plates were arranged. Mounting the stairs he knocked at a door bearing the inscription:

"Henry Clarke, Financial Agent."

A voice from within said:

"Come in."

Gooley entered, and the occupant rose from his chair.

"How do, Fred? What in the name of fortune brings you out at this early hour?"

Gooley handed him the paper.

"Read that, Henry, my boy."

Henry read, and exclaimed:

"Well, you don't mean to say you believe that; besides, you are too thick skinned to frizzle much."

"Frizzle be hanged," cried Gooley. "Don't you see a gold mine there, the biggest thing we've struck?"

Clarke sat down, and pointed to a chair, saying:

"Fire away, I'm all attention."

"In the first place," said Gooley. "do you think the B.P. can be made to swallow that prediction?"

Clarke rapped the table before speaking, then said:

"A good percentage probably will, but it will have to be kept before them and strengthened from other sources."

Gooley smiled.

"That's my idea entirely."

After a long talk and much jotting down on paper, the skeleton of a big scheme was built up.

A few days later Gooley made another visit to Clarke's office. Spreading some papers on the table they were soon at work.

"If only the nervous ones take the bait," said Gooley, "there's a fortune for us."

"Yes," answered Clarke, then after a pause, "I suppose you got those cuttings out for the papers?"

"That's all seen to. Biglie's prediction is now appearing in all papers of note."

Clarke nodded, saying:

"Well give the B.P. about a week to digest it, then for our second move, How does it read?"

Gooley opened a notebook and read:

"Doomed Humanity. According to Professor Biglie and other eminent men it would seem that some terrible catastrophe is threatened on Nov. 27th, 1901. All seem agreed that the comet Ceila will come into collision with the earth at three in the afternoon on the date men-

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tioned. Should this prove to be correct then humanity will for a certainty be destroyed. We are apt to smile at modern prophets, but strange and ominous are the writings of an old German seer. These have recently been discovered in a German monastery and bear the date July, 1783. There are many prophecies in quaint verse, most of these have been fulfilled. We have translated the following:

"A year, its value ten,
End of century. List: all men.
For wh n the Archer, Sol doth see.
Alas! Alas! humanity.
A fiery comet here appears.
It comes in haste, the earth it nears,
A scorching heat; a dying wail,
All perish by its fiery tail.

"This clearly points to November 1900. 1+9+0+0 =10, the value of the year. The Archer is the Zodiacal sign Sagittarius, and Sol, the Sun, enters this sign about the 1st day of November.

"An old proverb states that 'Prevention is better than cure.' We agree with this and think it would be well for some of our scientific men to turn their attention to this threatened calamity, and though it may not be needed, the watchword should be 'Ready; aye, ready.' With care and forethought, something might be done to mitigate the evil."

"Capital, capital," exclaimed Clarke, "that should fetch them."

"It's not a bad leader for the next move," said Gooley proudly.

Clarke consulted a calendar, looked up, and said:

"All the baiting must be done with by the end of next month."

"That will give us nearly two months to catch and land the spoil," remarked Gooley with a laugh as he rose to his feet.

A fortnight later they met again, and Gooley read a copy of the third and last notice to appear in the papers.

Clarke took a cigarette and prepared to act the critic.

"The Comet Ceila Defied. Messrs. Sharpe and Gullem have, for last three years, been endeavouring to devise a means whereby clothing can be made fireproof. After much search, experiment, and large expense, they have met with success. This coming on the eve of the threatened catastrophe from the fiery element points to the Hand of Fate, as having chosen Messrs. Sharpe and Gullem as the Saviours of Humanity. Their discovery consists of a powder, so prepared that when dissolved in water it will make any fabric saturated therewith fireproof. This preparation is put up in boxes. Small size, 5s.; large, 7s. 6d. Full instructions with each box. Address: Salamander Powder Company, Dupe Street, E.C."

Gooley finished reading, and looking across at Clarke, said:

"How's that, will it fetch them?"

"Yes; you are a genius, my boy. What a pity you are not a writer for patent medicines."

"Chuck it," said Gooley, "we've got to move now. Just hand your share over to pay for the ingredients for that powder."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Clarke. "One ton chalk, and quarter ton carbolic, just to give it a chemical odour."

Taking a pen he asked the amount required and handed a cheque to Gooley.

"Thanks. I suppose the water will be the only fireproof thing about it, but you can safely bet it will never be tested by Ceila," remarked that worthy.

A popular 11 o'clock lunch

especially in cold weather, is a "cup of hot Bovril." It not only warms and stimulates but also nourishes, sustains and invigorates the system, fortifying it against the attacks of disease and the inclemencies of the weather. To the outdoor man, battling with the elements, it is peculiarly acceptable; to the indoor worker it is a no less beneficial vitaliser and nourisher; to the homekeeper, tired with the care and responsibilities of house duties, it is a comforting and refreshing sustainer.

BOVRIL

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All preparations were made, and orders came pouring in. The B.P. took the bait, and Salamander Powders were the rage. The perpetrators of the swindle were nearly suffocated with stamps and postal orders.

Never in history had a prediction been known to take such firm hold. Revival meetings were held in the theatres and music-halls. Laughter and pleasure were things of the past. Brewery shareholders began to look serious. The asylums were overcrowded with the insane, and business generally was paralysed.

The scenes in London can best be described from the writings of those who were in the Metropolis on the seventh of November when the prediction was expected to be verified.

"A dull morning, the sky clouded and a drizzly rain. Business at a standstill. Large crowds are gathered in the public squares listening to the evangelists and members of the various religious bodies. It is plain that something unusual is afloat. Serious countenances everywhere. The silence is oppressive. As three o'clock approached, men were seen to stagger and fall in the streets, their hearts unable to stand the strain."

Again: "The public baths in all parts of London were used for dipping clothing. Families combined and placed their Salamander Powders together, thus turning a bath into a huge dipping tank. A walk through the streets soon convinced me that all the wash tubs in the city had been called into service. All classes of clothing were undergoing the fire-proof treatment. In some cases such was the haste that women dipped children and clothing together."

From another: "Placards were posted all over the city drawing attention to the value of previous predictions, and intreating the people to use common sense, but to no purpose. The nation had decided that it must pass through this fiery ordeal and reason was thrown aside. The railway stations were crowded with those who wished to get near their distant friends to face the danger together. Many lives were lost through crushing and accidents on the line."

Another extract reads: "The ice stores of Messrs. Colder and Colder were broken into, the excited mob thinking the danger would not reach them there. Men forgot their manhood, women and children were trampled under foot, and men fought like beasts for a safe place. Gangs of men entered houses and took what valuables they could lay their hands on. If resisted, revolvers and knives were freely brought into action. Many householders forfeited their lives in the endeavour to save their property. Humanity had gone mad. Here men were on their knees calling for mercy. A few yards away they were looting, cursing, and allowing the worst passions to prevail. When the clocks struck three the fever point was reached. Yet the sky changed not, not even a breath of hot air to herald the approach of Ceila. Millions of eyes were strained to catch a glimpse of that which they prayed not to see. The quarter chime rang out. Someone was wrong. Men looked into one another's eyes, as if seeking the answer to an unspoken question."

A subdued muttering, then a wild shout and the silence was broken. Men, women, and children danced with joy. Listen, why the sudden change? Is the demon approaching after all? No, a fit of passion has now seized the mob. Shouts of vengeance are in the air. Men push their wives aside. Hands are clenched, and an angry light shines in their eyes. It has slowly dawned upon them that they have been fooled. Someone suggests that the clothing that has passed through the fireproof treatment shall be tested. Wood is soon procured and a large fire quickly roars in the square. Clothing is collected and thrown on.

"It burns! it burns!" shout the crowd.

A tall burly fellow waves his hand from a window for silence; this obtained, he speaks:

"Men, you have seen how this so called fire-proof powder has been tested. It is a swindle, it and the whole thing. A put up job to get money out of our pockets. Look at the lives lost, reasons destroyed, and property robbed. Are we as Englishmen going to stand this?"

"No! No!" shout the crowd.

The speaker continues:

"Let us go to this Dupe Street and find them who have fooled us. Dip them in their own fire-proof solution, and test them and it on this fire. Keep the fire going, you fellows."

A roar of applause follows this speech and the crowd hurry in the direction of Dupe Street. Policemen try to bar their way but as well try to stop a flooded river. Reaching Dupe Street they find the birds flown and the doors locked. Stones crash through the windows, the doors are burst open and the furniture smashed. They are mad at the escape of their prey. Nothing can stay them. The broken furniture is piled in the centre of the room and fire set to it. What matter if the innocent do suffer. The rooms of the Salamander Powder Company shall be known no more, those having offices in the same block must put up with the results. Thus one of the largest fires in London was started and witnessed by thousands of the frenzied and baffled dupes of Gooley and Clarke. The fire engines are driven back and only allowed to play on the adjacent property. As the fire gains hold the crowd roar with delight, and only when the building has become a blackened ruin do they disperse.

Where were the originators of this swindle? Thanks to Gooley, had he not seen the consequences of the failure of Biglie's prediction and the exposure of the Salamander Powders, he and his partner must have perished at the hands of their dupes. But as he remarked to Clarke:

"We shall have to slide out of this before the seventh. The best thing to do is to turn all the paper money and stamps into cash and book for America."

Clarke readily assented to this. So with all the money they could lay their hands on, which amounted to a decent fortune, they left Dupe Street. Berths were secured on the *Persalia*, and England's shores lost sight of on the sixth.

GEORGE BRATLEY.

In the Christmas Double Number of "SHORT STORIES" will appear the first of a series of articles entitled "BRITAIN'S WARS." They are written in a very readable style, and the whole will form a complete history of the most important wars in which Britain has been engaged.

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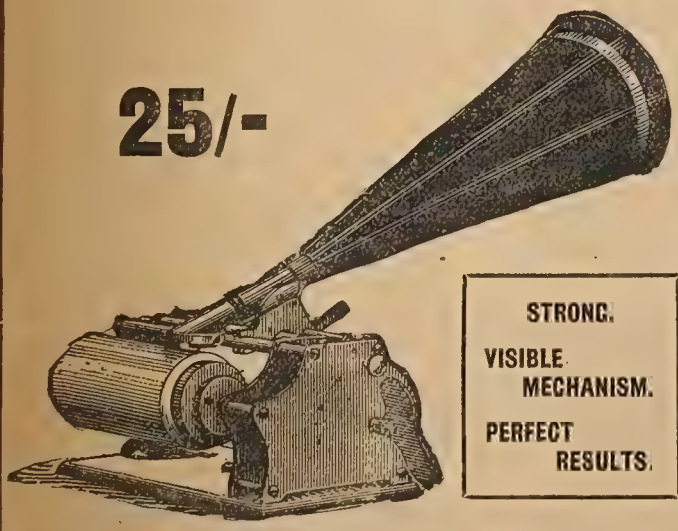

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PEARSON'S WEEKLY

FOOTBALL SKILL COMPETITION

£100 PRIZE AWARDED EVERY WEEK.

Result of Competition No. 3.

As no one sent in the correct results of all the matches the £100 has been divided among the following three competitors, each one receiving £33 6s. 8d.: D. Hebd, 2 Allan Street, Leith, N.B.; J. Chubb, St. Mary's Villa, Matham Road, E. Molesey; W. Foden, 47 Kennington Road, S.E.

Notts Forest, Stoke, Manchester City, New Brighton Tower, Bristol City, and Millwall won their matches. The remainder were drawn games.

The football matches named below will be played on Saturday, November 17th. To the competitor from whom we receive the correct result of all these matches we will pay the sum of ONE HUNDRED POUNDS. If no competitor gives all the results correctly, the HUNDRED POUNDS will be awarded to the person or persons most nearly correct.

FOOTBALL COUPON No. 6. Matches to be played on Saturday, November 17th.

Matches to be Played on Saturday, Nov. 17th.	Free	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Wolverhampton W. v. 2 Sheffield United																			
1 Derby County v. 2 Blackburn Rovers																			
1 Notts County v. 2 Bury																			
1 Sheffield Wednes. v. 2 Liverpool																			
1 Aston Villa v. 2 Newcastle United																			
1 Preston North End v. 2 Manchester City																			
1 Grimsby Town v. 2 Small Heath																			
1 Newton Heath v. 2 Blackpool																			
1 Leicester Fosse v. 2 Burnley																			
1 Tottenham Hotspur v. 2 Bristol Rovers																			

The clubs engaged in each match are numbered 1 and 2. To fill in the above coupon, insert in the space provided the number of the club selected to win. To predict a draw, put X. THE FIRST COUPON IS FREE. A penny stamp must be inclosed for each coupon used in addition to the free one. Nine extra coupons may be used for Sixpence, and eighteen extra coupons for One Shilling.

I send in this coupon as a competitor for the prize advertised in this paper, and subject to the conditions printed on this page:

Name and address.....

THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1. Coupons may be sent either from "Pearson's Weekly" or "Short Stories."
2. All coupons must reach us not later than Friday, November 16th, first post.
3. Competitors should cut out the whole coupon, score it as directed, put their name and address in the space provided, and send to "COUPON No. 6," Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
4. All coupons are at senders' risk, and if they go astray, from whatever cause, we do not accept responsibility.
5. Competitors must attach their private address to their attempts. No prize will be sent to any post-office, refreshment rooms, or other places at which letters are called for. Attempts bearing such addresses will be disqualified.
6. In the event of a tie the prize will be divided.
7. Competitors may send in any number of attempts.
8. It must be taken as a condition of the competition that anybody competing therein agrees to abide by the Editor's final decision.

Intending competitors in the above would do well to procure a copy of "The Football Who's Who," which contains valuable information and statistics showing the previous records of the various clubs, and the particulars of the points of about a thousand of the best known players. This book will be found of great service in determining the chances of the teams engaged. It only costs a shilling, and may be obtained of all booksellers, and post free for 1s. 3d. from the Publisher, 17 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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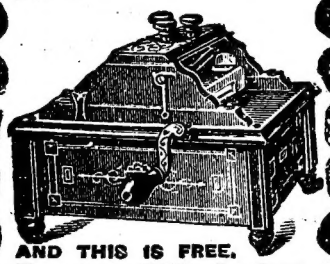
ORCHESTRAL

35/- FOR AN ORGANETTE WORTH £4 4s.

The finest and most unique musical instrument ever made. Worthy a place in every home. Highly praised by all lovers of GOOD music. Built just like a full-sized Organ, with 2 sets of reeds and 3 beautiful stops. Requires no teaching or knowledge of music. **A CHILD CAN PLAY IT** with effect equal to the performance of a talented pianist.



AND THIS IS FREE.

We are presenting FREE to all applicants a copy of our Householder's Money Saving Guide to Jewellery, Watch, Cutlery, &c., buying. Profusely illustrated. Handsomely got up. A wealth of useful household information. Teaches you how to save money in buying. Write for it to-day—at ONCE. It is worth a postcard.

J. M. DRAPER (Dept. 366), Organette Works, Blackburn.

ORGANETTE

VARICOCELE.

Every man suffering from Varicocele and the allied troubles, should send for treatise, describing their Causes, Symptoms, Results, and Successful and Painless Treatment without surgical operation or the use of cumbersome trusses and electrical appliances. Will be sent sealed, post free, three stamps.

S. S. MURRAY,
7 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

WHY BE FAT?

When a lady, who has discovered a simple means of Self-Cure will be happy to send particulars of same to any sufferer from this distressing complaint. Free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope. ADDRESS:

Mrs. TREVOR WELLS,
63 *HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.*

HAVE YOU TRIED KEATING'S LOZENGES FOR YOUR COUGH?

ANY DOCTOR WILL TELL YOU "there is no better Cough Medicine."—One gives relief: if you suffer from cough try them but once: they *will* cure, and they *will not* injure your health; an increasing sale of over 80 years is a certain test of their value. Sold in 1½d. tins.

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

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GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

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POST FREE THREE STAMPS

A Treatise on the Modern and Successful Treatment of Nervous Diseases and Exhaustion, by local absorption.

Fully up to the advanced ideas on the subject.

THE MARSTON CO.,
59 and 60 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 193 Oxford Street London, W.

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

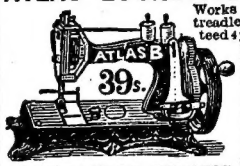
For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

TOO STOUT

I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lb., and I will willingly send particulars **free** to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.



Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine. To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

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63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

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By the Free Use of

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PRICE ONE SHILLING. BY POST 1/2.

The LILLIE SYNDICATE,
3 (S.S.) HENRIETTA STREET,
LONDON, W.C.

Free

From the Antexema Co., 83 Castle Road, London, N.W., if this paper is named, a booklet on the Skin and a FREE SAMPLE of

"Antexema."

It is absolutely the most wonderful Skin Cure that has ever been discovered. It gives immediate relief from itching and burning and cures all skin diseases and every form of

Eczema.

1/1½ BOTTLES, post free for 1/3.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.**, Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 28lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

2/9 CHALLENGE TO THE WORLD—OUR WARRANTED TIMEKEEPER, 2/9

With a guarantee to keep correct time for three years, will be sent to any address on receipt of P.O. or stamps value 2/9 and three stamps extra for postage. To every purchaser during this month we give with it ABSOLUTELY FREE a strong Mexican SILVER CHAIN. All we ask of you is to show them to your friends, as by doing so you advertise our business.

GENEVA WATCH IMPORTERS,
148 Old Street, London, E.C.

RUPTURE

Gentleman (cured himself) will send Free Particulars of inexpensive self-curative treatment. Stamped address.—(Box 49), 59 Castle Street, Carlisle.

2,500 CYCLES FREE.

Our Lady's or Gent's Link will be sent, free of any charge for delivery, on receipt of 1/6. We are Giving these Machines Away as

A STARTLING ADVERTISEMENT,

feeling assured that after you receive the Bicycle you will recommend our firm and explain to your friends how you obtained it.

1/6 FREE. 1/6

Genuine Offer.

We will send with the Bicycle a nickel silver lamp and pump, and the whole will be packed in wood crate and sent to your address Free immediately you take advantage of this advertisement and the offer we send. Do not hesitate, as by delay you may lose the chance. All orders dispatched in rotation. Send 1/6 P.O. or stamps, and stamped addressed envelope for receipt. ADDRESS—

LONDON DIRECT SUPPLY Co., Dept. S.S.
4 Duke Street, London, W.C.

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Transposed Letter Competition.

First Prize . . . . £5.
Second Prize . . . . £2.
Third Prize . . . . £1.

CLOSING DAY NOVEMBER 26TH.

LAST LIST.

AGR; ETS; AEMN; ORTY.

MARK YOUR ENVELOPES "BRAIN."

Here are four sets of letters, and prizes will be awarded to the competitors who send in the longest words containing the letters in each of their combinations.

For example, the following words contain the letters IST in their different combinations: fIST, ITSelf, SIT, STIpend, ouTSIde, adverTISe.

CONDITIONS.

1. Write your attempts on one side of the paper only, and post the four lists in an envelope marked "Brain," to reach this office on Monday, November 26th.

2. **All words must appear in HEAVY TYPE in Nuttall's Standard Dictionary, and must be different.** ***Compound words with or without hyphens, and proper names are not available.***

3. The letters of the combinations must either be underlined or put in red ink or capitals in the words in which they occur.

4. In the event of a tie, the prize will be divided.

5. The Editor's decision is final, and competitors must enter on that understanding.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 241 to 246.

THE prize of £2 has been awarded this week to Miss N. Daley, of 49 Salisbury Street, Liverpool, whose attempt was the first correct one dealt with.

A copy of "The Red Men of the Dusk," by John Finnemore, has been sent to each of the following:

Sergt. H. Hodge, Plumstead.
Thomas H. Howard, Swine, Holderness, East Yorks.
Miss M. Watson, Anerley Road, S.E.
W. Tackley, Willes Road, Kentish Town, N.W.
Rev. G. P. Horne, Newby Wiske, Northallerton, Yorks.
W. J. Cole, Merthyr Tydfil.
Mrs. Berry, Heathfield, Sussex.
R. Gilbert, Cowper Street, Glasgow.
R. Longfield, Kew Road, Richmond.
F. J. Smith, Alpha House, Saxmundham.

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BY ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth. Price 2s. 6d.

Some of the 27 Chapters are:

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THE John Noble

Model 313.

Tailor designed Reefer Coat and full wide Skirt, in Cheviot Serge, or Costume Coating. Price **10/6** only **10/6** complete. Carriage, 6d. Or the Skirt alone for **5/6**. Carr., 5d.

Model 256.

Made in Costume Coating or Cheviot Serge. Full Tailor Skirt and well-cut Bodice with velvet revers. Price complete Costume, **10/6**. Carriage, 6d. Or the Skirt alone for 5/6; carriage, 5d. Prettily Trimmed HAT (as sketch), **7/6**. Carriage, 5d.

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Smartly made Dress in Cheviot Serge or Costume Coating. Bodice trimmed Ribbon Velvet and well lined.

Lengths and Prices:

36	38	42	46	50 in.
10/-	11/-	12/-	13/-	14/- ea.

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COSTUMES AND MANTLES FOR LADIES AND CHILDREN

Sent without delay by Parcel Post, safely packed. Satisfaction given or money returned.

PATTERNS SENT POST FREE

of the very durable fabrics in which the Costumes are made:

THE JOHN NOBLE CHEVIOT SERGE, and THE JOHN NOBLE COSTUME COATING, &c., as requested.

A FULL DRESS LENGTH of either Cloth (6yds. 52ins. wide) for **7/6**. Carriage 8d.

Colours: Black, Navy, Myrtle, Brown, Fawn, Khaki, Grey, and Royal Blue.

Sizes in Stock of Ladies' Costumes are: 34, 36, 38 in. round bust (under arms); Waists, 24, 26, 28 in.; Skirts being 38, 40, 42 in. long in front. Any other size made to measure, **1/6** extra.

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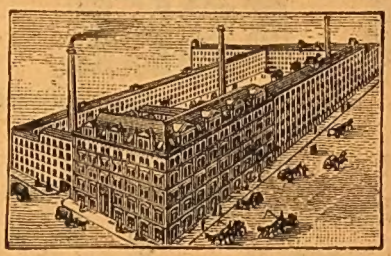

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A LADY'S CAPE.
SPECIAL VALUE.

Model 339.

Lady's Cape, well made and finished in good Black Cloth, **8/6** with collar and front trimmed Black Fur. Length 26 inches. Price only **8/6**. Carriage, 6d.

HANDSOME TOQUES.

As sketch, **6/11** each. Carriage, 6d.

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JOHN NOBLE KNOCKABOUT FROCKS FOR GIRLS.

Made in good strong Serge, with long sleeves and pocket. Price **1/6** for 2lin. long in front, and 6d. for every 3in. longer. Carr., 4d.

WINTER DRESS FABRICS.

Homespuns, Fancies, Silk Mixtures, Alpacas, Velveteens, Jacquards, &c., and All-Wool Serges.

The Finest Collection in the Kingdom at specially Moderate Prices.

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lent to choose from, and sent carriage paid, together with the **New Fashion List** illustrating Special Values in **Children's Costumes, Millinery, Underclothing, Waterproofs, Houselinen, &c.**

Readers will oblige by kindly naming "SHORT STORIES" when writing to

JOHN NOBLE LTD., MANCHESTER.

Dept. No. 46, Brook Street Mills,

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VELVETEEN?

FIVE LETTERS ONLY.

Don't Forget this when you buy.

EVERY YARD IS STAMPED

L-O-U-I-S.

ZEBRA

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No Hard Work.

A FREE TRIAL FOR 2/6.

50 FULL SIZE HIGH-CLASS TABLE REQUISITES FOR 25/-

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6 Table Forks	5	3
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6 Dessert Forks	3	9
2 Table Spoons	1	9
6 Dessert Spoons	3	9
6 Tea Spoons	2	0
1 pair Sugar Tongs	1	0
1 Sugar Sifter	1	6
6 Egg Spoons	1	6
2 Salt Spoons	1	0
2 Mustard Spoons	1	0
50	29	0

GOOD ENOUGH FOR A GENTLEMAN'S TABLE.

"4 Albany Place, Montpelier, Bristol.
"Sept. 1, 1900.

"Dear Sirs,—I herewith acknowledge receipt of cutlery received last evening, which gives entire satisfaction. I am, indeed, pleased with same, and shall do all I can to recommend you to my friends.

"Yours truly,
"A. SAVAGE."

"Grimaly House, Brackenboro' Road,
"South Linc.
"August 27, 1900.

"Dear Sirs,—I received the parcel of cutlery, and was very pleased indeed with it, and very good value for the money; it is really surprising how you can do it for the price. Thank you for your prompt attention.—I remain, yours sincerely,

"G. S. WRIGHT."

Any reader of *Short Stories* can have one of these parcels on monthly payments as follows:

You send us 2/6 with your name and address, and we will send one on approbation.

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BUT OUR-NETT-CASH-WITH-ORDER-PRICE is 23/- only.

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J. N. MASTERS Ltd., Cutlers, RYE, SUSSEX.

"Roxley Nat. School,
"June 1, 1900.

"Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your parcel of cutlery, 23/-, and am very pleased indeed with it. I did not expect the thing could be nearly so good at the price, especially on the terms you supply them on. Thank you very much.—Yours truly,

"A. A. PORTER."

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